

**THE LITERARY
REMAINS OF
THE REV.
THOMAS PRICE,
CARNHUANAWC**

Thomas Price, June
Williams



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THE

Literary Remains

OF

THE REV. THOMAS PRICE,

Carnhuanawc,

VICAR OF CWMDŪ, BRECONSHIRE; AND RURAL DEAN:

AUTHOR OF HANES CYMRU, ESSAYS ON THE GEOGRAPHICAL PROGRESS OF EMPIRE
AND CIVILIZATION, ETC. ETC.

Alan, James, Galston
VOLUME I.
March, 1858.

"Books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a progeny of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve, as in a phial, the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive as those fabulous dragon's teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men."

MILTON'S "Areopagitica," Section vi.

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The Frontispiece has been taken by Miss Whitehead, Photographic Artist, Whitehead Grove, Chelsea; from the original Portrait painted in the year 1846 by Mr. Charles Augustus Mornewick, now in the possession of Lady Hall of Llanover.

The Prints are from the Anastatic Press of Mr. Covell of Ipswich.

PREFACE.

MULTIPLIED engagements having prevented the Ven. John Williams, Archdeacon of Cardigan, from executing his intention of editing the *Literary Remains and Writing the Life of the late Rev. Thomas Price of Cwmdû*, the Publisher conjointly with the Principal Legatee and with the most intimate of Carnhuanawe's private Friends, anxious that no further delay should occur in rendering this due tribute to his memory, in the autumn of the year 1851, confided the editorial task to other hands. A mingled mass of unsorted papers, comprising the miscellaneous accumulations of more than fifty years, and including the principal materials for the present work, were, consequently, delivered untouched to the present possessor.

The estimated expense of the publication was, however, too great to be prudently undertaken by Mr. Rees, without the safeguard of a Subscription List; and the tedious process of enrolling 500 names has retarded the appearance of the present Volume.

As the Author of the "*Hanes Cymru*," the best existing History of his country and nation, Mr. Price's name is already immortalized by the Welsh Bards. His contributions to various Welsh Magazines are likewise well known and highly valued throughout the Principality. As an English writer he, as yet, is chiefly known by several clever papers in periodical works,

and by his separate *Essays on Physiology*,* and on the *Geographical Progress of Civilization*.†

Reflection upon the past is so natural to man, that history has ever been a favourite study. To the illiterate, history is comprised in the recollections and traditions of their progenitors, and in the visible and tangible existing monuments, locally connected with such orally transmitted facts.

The diffusion of elementary literature has lately enabled persons of all classes to indulge their several inclinations in acquiring various kinds of information. Antiquarian science has consequently become in our days almost a popular study; while associations of accomplished and industrious scholars systematically group its facts, define its objects, direct methodical inquiry, and contribute tested truths for the correction, establishment, and enrichment of history.

The minds of the Cymry are so deeply imbued with reverence for every vestige of the past, and especially for such as relate to their religion or their race, that the observation and description of ancient remains has long employed the leisure hours of many among their reading and reflecting mechanics and husbandmen.

In general, an increased acquaintance with the habits of life of our predecessors, tends to produce feelings of stronger interest and more tender veneration towards them as our forefathers. On the contrary, among the Welsh it is affectionate regard for their patriarchal chiefs, which endears to their ever mindful descendants, every thing belonging to the old times in which they lived. Family affection expands into national attachment, and extends to kindred races. The Welshman's love of antiquities is therefore a part of his patriotism.

* Rodwell, London. 1829.

† Longman, 1847.

The political earthquake, which in the fifth century broke up the Western Empire, left the severed countries of Europe, still vibrating from the shock, to lie obscured by its succeeding mists for ages.

To penetrate that gloomy depth of time, explore its shadowy regions, define its boundaries, and bring to light its monumental records, has, within the last century, excited the ambition of many Continental and British scholars. Among them, simply intent upon discovery, and thoughtless of fame, Mr. Price unostentatiously laboured. His affections as well as his intellects were engaged in such researches. Thus, when reviewing the origin of Grecian arts and customs, did Herodotus explore the stupendous monuments and sacerdotal traditions of Egypt. Thus, under the dominion of imperial Rome, did Pausanias fondly visit and record the ruined glories of his native Greece. Filial veneration and love endearing every relic of the race, hallowing the ancestral footsteps, and fondly absorbing the individual in his people.

British Archæology was to Mr. Price at once a favourite study, and an habitual recreation; and the elucidation of the political and literary history of the Cymry ever formed the central point, towards which the lines of all his other antiquarian researches regularly converged. The Essay on the Statute of Rhuddlan, will probably be deemed an acceptable contribution to diplomatic archæology. The Tour in Brittany, not only bears treasures for almost every section of that science, but also forms a narrative so engaging and full of entertaining matter, as to offer attractions to the most desultory reader.

The Bardic Poetry of Wales, from about the sixth to the fifteenth century, forms the principal subject of the Essays contained in the present Volume. They

were all of them written for competition at Eisteddfodau, with a view to ultimate publication.

Some readers may perchance feel tempted to regret, that the translations from the Welsh Bards, should not be given in verse. For their consolation must suffice the remark made by Pope, in the preface to his translation of the *Iliad*, that

“If there be sometimes a darkness, there is often a light in antiquity, which nothing better preserves than a version almost literal.”

It must also be considered that insuperable difficulties attend the attempt to render into English metre that fulness of meaning, which animates the epithets of Welsh poetry. No adequate terms or correspondent phrases can be found for their expression; and paraphrase alone can convey to the English reader some faint idea of their aptness, beauty, and power.

The extraordinary merit of Mr. Price's English versions of Ancient Welsh Poetry, has long been acknowledged by all competent judges.

If Dr. Owen Pughe, and his fellow-labourers, in editing the *Myfyrian Archæology*, may be allowed to deserve conjointly the credit of an Aristarchus; none can reasonably deny to Mr. Price, for his commentaries and conjectural criticisms upon the Ancient Bardic Remains, the well merited praise of an Eustathius.

Mr. Price's speculative ingenuity, his unselfish predilection for recondite inquiry, and his ingenuous temper fitted him in a very remarkable degree for archæological disquisitions. These natural qualifications were every day enhanced by assiduous study, and by the continual growth of cultivated experience, which produced, in simultaneous luxuriance, the fruits ripe and immature, the fair flowers and promising buds, and natural foliage, which, carelessly gathered by pass-

ing occurrences, now lie intermingled for the use of his survivors.

When an author has once laboriously produced a work, sufficiently comprehensive to embody all his knowledge, and give expression to all his opinions ; a work, lighted and warmed, pervaded and vivified by his own peculiar spirit ; composition must ever afterwards become to him an act of comparative ease. The mind having proved her faculties, will henceforth proceed to employ them in the joy of conscious strength. The sense of toil is lessened by long habits of close application ; and practical experience has taught a frugal management, of time, and space, and manual labour, which facilitates all subsequent undertakings. Such a comprehensive work was the "*Hanes Cymru*,"* (History of Wales) of Mr. Price. During six years, 1836—1842, he had diligently laid up there the gathered stores of his past life, essentially condensed into all that he then knew, and thought, and felt. One of the Essays contained in the present Volume was contemporary with the middle part of Mr. Price's great work ; and two of the others were subsequent to its completion. The remaining one, although of antecedent date, was revised by its Author within the very last few months of his life. Mr. Price did not survive, by a single day, the full and vigorous maturity of his intellect. These Essays therefore, containing the last enunciations of that critical judgment, to which Celtic scholars ever gladly appeal, may with justice be reckoned among the most valuable of his works.

Virgil, in his last illness, knowing that the *Æneid* still wanted the finishing strokes, which he alone could give, and frustrated, by the command of Au-

* Williams, Crickhowel, 1842.

gustus in his intention of having it destroyed, consigned it finally to the care of his friends, Varius and Tucca, for publication, on condition, that they should not attempt to correct the poem, nor make the very smallest addition to the genuine text, even to fill up a break in a single line.

The record of this fact stands a beacon to all Editors; and cannot fail to direct the course of him, who trembles consciously within, lest the touch of ignorant presumption should some day blot his own productions. But, while literary sympathy thus stays the rude hand of alteration, it serves to direct and animate the labours of criticism .

The forthcoming Memoir of Mr. Price, is intended to contain a summary view of all his works. A few brief paragraphs, therefore, may convey all the information here required by the reader, for a just appreciation of the present Volume. To each of the five following pieces a short introductory account of it is prefixed, and some few notes are added here and there. Mr. Price himself was sensible that he had laid by these Essays in an unfinished state; and once in conversation with a friend, he pleaded want of time for revision, as an excuse for deferring the publication.

To communicate improving knowledge to his countrymen, and to inform the world of things redounding to Cambria's national honour, having always been made points of practical use, and of conscientious duty by Mr. Price, it is confidently believed, that the present publication fulfils his ultimate intention. His objection having certainly arisen, not from personal considerations, but merely from a fear, that the want of elaborate completeness might prejudice his readers against the subject of the work.

From that apprehended danger the posthumous ap-

pearance of these Literary Remains will, doubtless, secure them; and the over-spreading charm of a venerated and beloved memory may more than counteract some faults of plan and diction.

The numerous repetitions appearing in the collected MSS., have compelled the Editor to strike out many pages of quotations, and some original sentences. In their stead, references have been inserted to parallel passages, which are thus, with a saving of space, made to serve their double and sometimes treble purposes.

As regards the style, the Editor has merely tried to rectify mistakes of the pen; to supply unintentional omissions affecting the sense; occasionally to inflect the form of a sentence, so as to avoid ambiguity, or prevent confusion; and to curtail redundancy and tautology; never correcting negligence unless it amounted to inaccuracy, and leaving untouched all such peculiarities as Mr. Price himself had either admitted into his previously published works, or repeated without change in frequent transcripts.*

It is usual to place the biography of a deceased Author in front of his posthumous works; and that arrangement is generally the best, because, after making an intimate acquaintance with the life and character of an amiable man, we become naturally disposed to receive his Literary Remains with a sort of friendly partiality. In the present instance, circumstances have prescribed the adoption of a different plan; and perhaps the accumulated works of the Author may thus form a solid and advantageous basis for his statue.

The Second Volume of this work will contain a Memoir of Mr. Price, embodying many of his fugitive

* Among these may be numbered his method of spelling Trouverres, Don Quixote, &c.

papers, selections from his correspondence, and notices of all his separately published works.

When the freighted merchant ship sails away upon her voyage, all know that perils wait for her, but none can foresee, in the possible occurrence of shipwreck, which precious things, among all her rich and various stores, may chance to be picked up floating, or to be washed ashore. Such is very much the case with personal remembrances. Some sink at once, others are preserved, as isolated waifs, by persons seemingly least likely to possess them. Some are hoarded up by friends, who punctiliously secure them among their hidden treasures. Comparatively few can ever be brought together to raise a trophy to their owner's honour.

Intention, however, may often insure the safety of certain documents, alike amid the billows of the ocean and of time. Thus, like the contents of carefully sealed glass vessels committed to the great deep; the printed and manuscript works of deceased authors appear before the public as memorials. But when inquiry rises, as to the personal history of him, who has thus informed and interested his countrymen, the materials which should compose it are often wanting; some lost irrecoverably, and the rest lying far asunder, covered by accident or veiled by self-interest. Diligent application alone can effect their recovery, their arrangement, and their compact embodiment; and the process must occupy a proportionate space of time. Great part of that labour has already been performed, and unremitting efforts will be made to effect the earliest possible completion of the Second Volume.

JANE WILLIAMS,

Ygafell.

Neuadd Felen, May 25, 1854.

A

Tour through Brittany.

At the Powys Eisteddfod, in the Autumn of the year 1824, a Prize was awarded to Mr. Price for the best Essay on "The Causes and Extent of the Early intimacy and Mutual intercourse between the Armoricans and Britons; and the National affinity still existing between their Descendants." It appears to have been his first attempt at English Essay writing, and contains a good deal of valuable matter, arranged with considerable ability. So much, however, of its substance was wrought up into his "Tour through Brittany," written several years afterwards, with increased sources of information and improved powers of diction; that the Editor, after mature consideration, has decided upon suppressing the crude Essay, and reprinting this Tour; a composition of sterling value, carefully finished and revised by its Author, and possessing peculiar interest as a piece of Autobiography. In its original form its circulation was limited by that of the Cambrian Quarterly Magazine, in which it appeared, and it has long been inaccessible to the Public.

A

Tour through Brittany,

MADE IN THE SUMMER OF 1829.

THERE are few places where a fine summer's day can be more pleasantly spent, than in the island of Jersey, with its cloistered lanes, its secluded sandy bays, its varied and amusing rocky coast ; it seems the perfect model of a snug liveable island : moreover, with this advantage, that should you be tired of one shore, an hour's walk will always take you to the opposite.

But it is not the mere scenery of Jersey that has occasioned the obtrusion of the present remarks ; for, however pleasing that may appear to the traveller, of whatever nation he may chance to be, yet it is too remotely connected with the history of our native country to occupy, on its own account, any portion of a work upon Cambrian literature. It is, therefore, to another subject, more consonant with the general matter of this publication, that I would confine my present observations.

It was in wandering along the coast of this delightful island, that I noticed upon a little rocky promontory, overlooking the beautiful bay of *Rozel*, the remains of one of those extraordinary monuments of antiquity, called *Druid altars*, which, till within these few years past, were so numerous in this island ; but of which, at the present time, this at Rozel Bay is almost the only specimen left.

This altar, or, rather, *cistfaen*, consists of two flat stones placed tablewise upon low pillars, the whole about three feet high. When perfect, it evidently consisted of four such flat stones, or cromlechs, placed together in a line, forming a long cistfaen, and enclosed within an oblong square of low stones, extending about thirty feet by fifteen, and affording a specimen of Druidic architecture not often met with; though it appears that this kind of monument was not uncommon in Brittany, as may be seen in the remains of those of a similar construction still found in that country, especially of one in the wood of *Cerfili*, in Morbihan.

These cromlechs, or cistfaens, for it is not always easy to distinguish between them, are called in Jersey *poquelays*, and in Brittany *policans* and *poulpiquets*, &c. The cistfaens are also in the latter country called *roches-aux-fées* and *grottes-aux-fées*; and these appellations of *fairy-rocks*, and *fairy-grottoes*, and the current superstition of the fairies dancing about these monuments at night, somewhat embolden me to venture upon the etymology which I have framed from the Jersey word *poquelay*, and to derive it from the Welsh words, *pucca*, a goblin, and *llech*, a stone; though I must own, that some of the Breton names have a little deranged my system, at least as far as the last syllable, *llech*, is concerned.

But, however interesting this small Celtic relic may be, in its present situation, where the scarcity of such monuments has made every remnant doubly precious, yet who-soever is desirous of examining Druidic remains, should pass over at once to the neighbouring province of Brittany, and there he will find them in greater profusion than perhaps in any other country whatever. And notwithstanding the unceasing and relentless hostilities, which have been waged against these monuments by agriculturists, builders, grubbing antiquaries, and treasure-finders, yet I should scarcely exaggerate, if I said that there are still existing in one department of Brittany, that is, in Morbihan, a greater variety of these curious remains, than in all the British islands put together. Whether they originally abounded in this district more than in others, or whether by some fortunate chance they escaped demolition here, while

those of other countries were destroyed, I cannot pretend to decide; but there is some reason for concluding, that, from the earliest periods of history, this corner of Europe was a favourite resort of the Druids; and, consequently, must have possessed a greater number and greater variety of their monuments than other places less frequented by them. I shall, therefore, for the present, make this little Jerseyan roche-aux-fées, a stepping-stone to that ancient country, upon whose antiquities it is my intention to offer a few remarks.

This province of Brittany, which was the Roman *Armorica*, is by the French called *Bretagne*, the inhabitants *Bretons*, and their Celtic language, the *Breton*, or more generally the *Bas Breton*.

By the Welsh it is called *Llydaw*, the people *Llydawiaid*, and the ancient language, the *Llydawaeg*; terms corresponding to the Latin word, *Leti*, &c.

But the Bretons themselves, in their own vernacular tongue, call the country *Breiz*, themselves *Breiziaded*, (singular *Breiziad*,) and their language *Brezonek*. They also make use of the word *Breton*, which is generally pronounced *Brettun*, with the accent on the first syllable; but never *Britoón*, as it is often heard pronounced in England.

When the French use the word *Bretagne*, without any adjunct, they invariably imply their own province of Brittany; for, when they speak of *Great Britain*, they always employ the terms *Grande Bretagne*; and sometimes, especially in old works, the Armorican province is designated, *La Petite Bretagne*. And this mode of contradistinguishing the two countries, was generally used by the Latin writers of the later ages, in the terms of *Major*, and *Minor Britannia*. We also frequently see the same epithets in English authors, that is, *Great*, and *Little Britain*.

The Bretons likewise themselves make the same distinction in their ancient Celtic language, calling our island *Breiz meur*, and their own province *Breiz vihan*; words answering to the Welsh of *Prydain fawr*, and *Prydain fechan*. England they call *Bro-zaos*, that is, Saxon land: and France, exclusive of their own territory, they call *Bro-Chall*, the land of Gaul.

As this country is distinguished from its insular parent by the appellation of *Little Britain*, it is also divided within itself into two districts, that of *Haute Bretagne*, or *Upper Brittany*, called in the Breton language *Breiz uchel*, or *Gorre-Vreiz*; and that of *Basse Bretagne*, or *Lower Brittany*, whose Breton name is *Breiz isel*, or *Gweled-Vreiz*.

Haute Bretagne, or *Upper Brittany*, which comprises the eastern division of the province, is, with regard to its external appearance, for the most part an exceedingly flat country, even when compared with the generality of France; but I do not hesitate to say, that it is one of the finest flat countries I ever saw; for, though there are vines enough in the southern part to mark the fertility of the soil, and warmth of the climate; yet there are not so many vineyards as to disfigure the face of the country: and the land is equally divided between corn and pasture. The enclosures also are very small, rarely exceeding a few acres; the hedges are formed of tall trees, and every field is an orchard: so that, at a certain distance, the whole country looks like an interminable forest, and that without the deserted and inhospitable aspect of a real uncultivated woodland. This part of Brittany, therefore, having, in addition to the above circumstances, the advantages of a southern climate, the richest flats of England will bear no comparison with it. And this style of beauty does not extend merely for a few stages, as in England, but accompanies you on your journey for many days together. I am not surprised that CONAN MERIADOC, and his companions, should have chosen this land for their portion, as the remuneration of their services in the cause of MAXIMUS; there are few parts of the Roman dominions which that emperor could have bestowed upon his old confederates, possessing greater attractions to an army fatigued with the toils of war, and from long experience acquainted with the respective evils and advantages of the various countries of Europe, than this.

Where the exact line of demarcation between the two divisions of the province lies, I am not able to state; but, in conversing upon the subject, the natives express themselves as if they considered it to be an imaginary boundary, concurrent with the difference of language, the French being

spoken for the most part in Upper Brittany, and the Breton in Lower Brittany; though, doubtless, there must be a territorial boundary, independent of language, the French and Breton having evidently changed their limits, in the course of time, as circumstances have contributed to the abolition of the one, and forwarded the introduction of the other. However, to speak in general terms, the division of Basse Bretagne comprises the western part of the province, as far as the promontory of Finistère. Why it is called *Lower* Brittany, I cannot discover, unless it is on account of its being the most remote from Rennes, once the capital and seat of government; as we say, *down to Wales, down to Scotland, &c.* or else from the western situation, as we talk of going *down channel*, when sailing to the west, for certainly its epithet of *Low*, does not by any means apply, with reference to the elevation of the ground; because, though no part of the country can with propriety be called mountainous, yet the few hills which do at all exist in the province, are almost exclusively to be found in this *lower* division; which is altogether a much more elevated district than the other.

These hills, or mountains, as the French call them, which, to an inhabitant of Wales, would seem but mere rising grounds, do in reality possess a much greater degree of elevation than they appear to have. Some of the highest are upwards of 900 feet above the level of the sea. The *Montagnes d'Aré*, in Finistère, being 286 metres, and the *Montagnes Noires* not much less; but the gradual slopes by which they ascend, and a very slight undulation of their outline, greatly diminish their apparent altitude.

As there is no large river, or marked natural boundary, between Upper and Lower Brittany, as may be supposed, the transition is not immediate from the character of the one region to that of the other; yet, on passing from one to the other, a few stages will remind us of a considerable change in the climate and aspect of the country, and as might be expected, in that of the inhabitants. Instead of the rich and luxuriant plains of the upper district, with its woods and orchards, Basse Bretagne, on the contrary, presents the appearance of a cold, hilly, and sterile region; the corn more scanty and later in ripening, a comparative deficiency of

wood, and the trees that do exist, especially in high situations, stunted, and bending from the west wind. Of course there are exceptions to this general character, and there are many sheltered spots in which the influence of a southern climate is perceptible in the more favourable appearance of the vegetation; and not unfrequently spots of considerable beauty. But generally speaking, this country, from the elevation of the land, and its peninsular situation, is more subject to rain than any part of France, and even than many parts of England. And doubtless it is to this ungenial state of the climate, that the dreary and naked appearance of the fences is to be attributed, which are for the most part formed of dikes or mounds of earth, unaccompanied by any hedges or trees. And as in so exposed a country, shelter is an important consideration, these embankments are, in the absence of hedge-rows, raised to the height of five or six feet. This circumstance, added to the diminutive size of the enclosures, which contain about one acre each, and their regular oblong square form, gives the face of the land a very singular appearance, and naturally suggests the idea of the difficulties which would attend the conducting of a campaign in this country, particularly if opposed by the natives. In fact, every field is a fortification, with its breast-works ready thrown up. It would require incredible labour to render it passable to artillery, or even to practise the regular movements of cavalry.

The destinies of nations are often connected with other causes far more difficult of comprehension than those which appear most prominent in their immediate operation; otherwise here, in this land of intrenchments, the brave and loyal little band of the *Chouans* might have continued to keep the republican troops engaged until their friends had rallied in other parts of the kingdom. But the revolutionary spirit had been too widely diffused, and too deeply imbibed, and numerous powerful, though hidden and unsuspected causes, had been too long in operation, to be then counteracted by a few local advantages and partial successes.

Whether it is the general humidity of the climate, which must make travelling less pleasant in this country than in the interior parts of France, or whether it is the difference

of language, and the primitive and grotesque dress of the people ; or perhaps an old hereditary grudge, occasioned by numerous ages of almost unceasing hostilities, that has impressed the French with the ideas they entertain of Basse Bretagne, I know not ; but certainly, if we attended to their report of it, we should conclude it to be, with respect to the appearance of the country itself, and of the people who inhabit it, the most repulsive place upon the face of the earth. I had so frequently heard this description of its uninviting character from the French inhabitants of Paris, and of the interior, that previously to my visiting it, and making observations for myself, I had naturally adopted their ideas, and not only expected to see something very different from what is usually met with in the rest of Europe, but had actually made preparations for an expedition, such as I was given to understand would take me beyond the limits of the civilized world. And when about to commence my excursion thither, it was my fortune to meet, in the city of Rennes, with a gay Parisian party, who so effectually succeeded in confirming my prejudices, that had I implicitly followed the advice they so liberally bestowed upon me, I should doubtless from thenceforward have most faithfully transmitted to others the same impression that had been communicated to myself. These savans, it appears, had just been making an excursion towards the borders of Basse Bretagne, but were then returning, as they said, completely disgusted, though they had only proceeded as far as the town of *Dinan*, which is not even within the limits of the country they were describing. And when I signified my intention of making a tour of the whole province, they most earnestly advised me to alter my plans, and occupy my time in visiting some other part of the kingdom ; for they assured me, that travellers who attempted Basse Bretagne, returned in disgust before they went more than a few stages into the country, for that its general aspect was that of desolation itself ; the roads were impassable ; and the people dirty, ragged barbarians, living in filthy huts, and clothed in sheepskins ; that, in short, every thing was *affreux*.

Having, therefore, heard so many repetitions of this description, I must confess that I was, in a great measure,

inclined to give it credence ; of course, making due allowance for a few French metaphors, and for the ideas of rural life, which these good Parisians had acquired in the Champs Elysées and the Tuileries Gardens, adding, moreover, that they had never seen the country themselves, but had undertaken to assure me of all this upon mere hearsay ; yet, notwithstanding all this, such was the urgent persuasiveness with which this advice was given, and the convulsive shrug which accompanied the emphatic pronounciation of the word *affreux*, that I absolutely forgot that this province contained the great towns of Brest and l'Orient, &c. and that through it ran some of the finest high roads in France ; and had gradually lapsed into that state of wondering expectation which a person would experience when about to land among the Caffres or Catabaws ; and, when I approached the borders of the Bas Bretons, I constantly kept a look out for something egregiously outlandish and untamed, something between the Esquimaux and the Hottentot, which should concentrate all the distinguishing characteristics of the savage of both hemispheres. I was thus looking out for my Breton cousins, in their sheepskins and nose-rings, and figuring to myself the *beau ideal* of rags and beggary which I was shortly to see realized ; when I heard the first words of Breton spoken, near Chatelaudren. I was not a little disappointed at not seeing the expected concomitants of war-mats and wigwams ; and it must be admitted that I was doomed to endure the same mortification as far as the town of Morlaix, and even down to Brest itself. For the truth is, that the Bas Bretons, along this line of country, so far from being the arrant savages those French cockneys would have us believe, on the contrary, live in as comfortable farm-houses as the same class of people in any part of France, and, to outward appearance, as well constructed as those of the small farmers in many parts of England. Their houses, so far from being mud huts, are well built, and that generally of stone, having good barns and outhouses, all well covered with tile or thatch ; though here, as in other countries, wherever building stone is scarce, and bricks not easily obtained, the usual substitute of earthen walls is had recourse to.

The inhabitants, it must be owned, appear a little grotesque in their dress, as they still retain the old costume worn in France, and some other countries, two centuries ago; and living upon coarse and scanty fare, they are of a spare habit, and of a rather sallow complexion, but they are by no means more ragged nor more dirty than their Frankish neighbours; though that is not saying much for them.

But although this accusation of barbarism is false, as implicating the general character of the Bas Bretons, yet it must not be concealed that there are some remote corners in the western department, on the sea-coasts and among the hills, in which the condition of the people seems extremely wretched, both with regard to their personal appearance and their mode of living; there, their dwellings are really mud cabins, ill built and dirty, and destitute of all that we understand by the comforts of life; but it is just as unfair to attach this character to the country in general, as it would be to include the city of London under the description of Wapping, or the new town of Edinburgh under that of the Canongate. But, even when the wretchedness of these poor creatures is seen and admitted in its full extent, there are many circumstances which, when rightly considered, will serve, if not to excuse, at least to explain its existence.

The only one which I shall now insist upon is the temperature of the climate; for the department of Finistère, though not so cold in winter as the interior, yet in summer is far less warm and genial, the thermometer seldom rising above 23 degrees, Reaumur, (not quite 84° Fahrenheit;) in addition to which, from its position so far in the Atlantic, it is exceedingly subject to rain and tempests; the wind blowing from north-west to south-west, for three quarters of the year, so that it often rains for weeks together without intermission; in short, fine weather is very rare, even in summer, the sky being generally covered with clouds. The number of rainy days in the year is upon an average 220.

In such a state of unceasing rain, it is not surprising that the natives should acquire an indifference to the effects of wet weather; and as it would be utterly impossible to guard against it out of doors, so it would be inconvenient for them to be continually changing their clothes, when wetted, or to

attempt to protect themselves from its influence by retiring under shelter; therefore, from sheer necessity, the peasantry of the western extremity have acquired such habits of carelessness in this respect, both in the fields and in their houses, as are by no means favourable either to personal or domestic cleanliness. And it is wonderful to what a pitch of hardihood these men have attained, for they may be seen walking about most deliberately in the heaviest rain, though drenched from head to foot for hours together. They seem quite amphibious.

But, while I am thus explaining, extenuating, and apologizing, lest I should incur the imputation of prejudice on the one hand, or of inconsistency on the other, I shall here endeavour to sum up the character of the country in a few words, according to the opportunities I had of making observations; and whatever degree of accuracy these remarks may possess, I feel conscious that they at least have the merit of impartiality.

The province of Brittany varies exceedingly in character in every particular, as we proceed from its eastern to its western extremity.

In the eastern department, the farmers live as *comfortably*, if that term may be permitted, as the same class in the other districts of France, although in no part of that kingdom can they bear the least comparison with the bettermost English farmers, either in comfort, cleanliness, or industry.

As we proceed westward, in proportion as the climate becomes less favourable, so the inhabitants become deteriorated in their general appearance, until we come to the wretched huts of Finistère, and there we certainly do find that kind of squalid misery that will justify a good deal of the tirade of abuse which my Parisian friends had levelled against the whole country without distinction. But while this state of wretchedness is admitted with regard to the secluded districts of Finistère, I can only say that is a fortunate country indeed which is entirely free from a similar reproach, with regard to its remote districts, especially if its territories can boast of any great extent; at least, I have seen in other countries quite as much misery as in the Basse Bretagne.

With respect to the origin of the present inhabitants of

this province, it is universally allowed that they are derived from two separate nations, though both of the Celtic race, that is, from the aboriginal Gaulish population of Armorica, and also from a later colony which emigrated from Great Britain, and afterwards mingled with the ancient inhabitants.

In what parts the insular Britons chiefly settled, or whether they chose any particular spots for their residence, or else dispersed themselves over the country in general, is not distinctly known. Though it is probable that the armed legions of CONAN MERIADOC would select the rich plains of the Loire and the Vilaine for their possession, as indeed the seat of government of that prince's descendants would clearly imply, whether at Nantes or at Rennes; while later emigrants would occupy such districts as would from time to time fall to their lot, according to their influence in obtaining them by favour, or their power in seizing them by force.

But, however this may have been, there does not at present exist any national variety of character among the Bretons, which can, in the remotest degree be attributed to the original difference of race; yet, nevertheless, from the variety of character which does exist there, the province of Brittany offers a fertile and extensive field for the speculations of the physiologist; for the inhabitants of the rich flat countries, having a tolerable supply of food, are as robust and well grown as those of France in general, and more so than many of the genuine Frankish districts, although in no part of the kingdom can the peasantry be said to live *well*; and, consequently, they do not possess that athletic frame and florid complexion, which is always characteristic of those countries in which good living forms one of the hereditary habits of the people.

In the luxuriant country surrounding the city of Rennes, they are of good stature, and well proportioned, and not unfrequently possessed of remarkably fine and handsome features.

As we proceed towards the hilly country in the west, a visible change takes place in the appearance of the people; the stature becomes smaller, and the frame of the body more slight, the features also bearing the stamp of harder and

more scanty fare, though sometimes, even here, may be seen some handsome countenances. And this change is not sudden, but gradual; nor is it concurrent with any division of language, or territorial boundary; but according to the most accurate observations I was enabled to make, it is in exact proportion to the quantity and quality of food, and the hereditary habits of the people, all of which is also most undoubtedly connected with the difference of soil and climate. For although the peasantry of the plains live poorly enough, in comparison with English farmers, yet having wholesome bread to eat, and a better supply of the other necessaries of life, when compared with the people of the hills, they may be said to fare sumptuously; for these poor creatures, so far from having wheaten bread to eat, do not always enjoy the luxury of that of barley, but generally subsist upon the miserable black bread made of *buckwheat*! of which, together with some cabbage, and occasionally a small bit of bacon, they make a kind of pottage; and this is their general food. A long and hereditary habit of living upon this wretched diet, and of being content with a scanty supply even of this, must have stamped upon their personal character a corresponding impression; and therefore we must not be surprised if we find, in the poorer districts, among the Bas Breton peasants, that diminutive stature, attenuated figure, and thin and skinny visage which I have just alluded to.

Whether the natives of the western coasts were driven to the necessity of adopting this wretched fare, by the poverty of their soil and ungenial nature of their climate, or else from the troubled and unsettled state of things, so unfriendly to the progress of agricultural improvement, which they must have experienced during so many ages of incessant wars, it may not be easy to pronounce; but I feel assured that this unfavourable style of personal appearance is purely attributable to the above circumstances, for among those Bas Breton families whose circumstances have enabled them to live more generously, we find as tall, as well-grown, as well-looking people as in other countries.

Notwithstanding this excess of frugality in their mode of living, it is said that many of the Bas Breton farmers are very rich; yet they seem to inherit and indulge in so miserly

a disposition, that they will deprive themselves of what we consider the necessities of life, rather than part with any portion of their long-hoarded family stores. This false economy, of course, prevents their engaging in any mercantile speculations, by entirely cramping the spirit of enterprise, and consequently obstructs the free circulation of money in the country; and thus they continue, as they always have done, hoarding up, with clenched hands, their slowly gathered wealth, unwilling ever to part with the penny which falls into their possession, until some inevitable necessity wrenches it from their grasp. There are individuals of this class in all countries, though the progress of general improvement has happily reduced their numbers, in many instances; and even in Basse Bretagne, a better system is beginning to work its way.

But if the Bas Bretons are, in some districts, small of stature, and slight of form, nature has made compensation for it, in bestowing upon them the most vigorous frame of body that it is possible for human beings to possess.

Having, soon after my arrival in Basse Bretagne, had occasion to make an excursion on foot across the country, I requested I might be provided with a guide who should accompany me, to point out the road, and also to carry my luggage. I accordingly soon found one of these little Bretons standing by me, with my wallet strapped upon his back, ready to start; but when I beheld his small stature, (about five feet five inches,) his thin and apparently feeble frame, I began to think that either he had mistaken my ideas of the qualifications of a guide, or else had undertaken much more than he was capable of performing; and I little doubted that I should in a short time have to leave him behind, and find my way without him as well as I could, with my package upon my own shoulders; and when, to signify my doubts as to his fitness for his situation, I mentioned the degree of speed at which I should expect him to walk, he begged I would be under no apprehension on that account, as he assured me he could perform all that, and more, with the greatest ease, and could carry my luggage at the same rate, not only as far as I intended going, but the whole of the day, if I wished it. And I verily believe he could; for he started off before me with such a light and elastic step,

that he absolutely kept me to a kind of trot for some hours together ; and, at the journey's end, did not seem to think he had done any thing extraordinary, but set off home again at the same rate. Nor was this man a singular instance ; for I had afterwards occasion to prove the pedestrian powers of several others, and found them all equally tough and hardy. They seem all sinew, or, rather, made of whalebone itself. Bonaparte once said, that the Bretons and Piedmontese were the best soldiers in his army ; and I can easily conceive that a regiment of these active little fellows would wear out the tallest grenadiers in Europe. And here a reflection is naturally suggested, which may admit of a moment's attention. If these men, though small of stature, possess some of the most useful physical powers in a more perfect degree than taller men, is it not a false value that is placed upon height of stature and size of limb, as far as they are supposed to excel in the possession of any important advantages ?

This vigorous frame of body, which the Bas Bretons seem to possess in so eminent a degree, if it has not always been applied to purposes of useful industry, yet it cannot be said that it has been entirely neglected, for they have ever been exceedingly fond of cultivating athletic exercises, and particularly that of wrestling, at which they have at all times been considered most expert. In former times, wrestling constituted one of the principal amusements of the Breton court ; and the accounts of the treasurers are almost always charged with sums of money given to the wrestlers. When the Constable de Richemont visited the city of Tours, in the time of Charles the Seventh, he took with him some wrestlers from Basse Bretagne, who exhibited their powers before the French court.

Such was the celebrity they had acquired in this art, that their superior strength and skill were universally acknowledged ; for when Francis the First, and Henry the Eighth, of England, met at *the field of the Cloth of Gold*, there was given a grand spectacle of a wrestling match between the French and English, in which the latter were victorious ; and the French writers of the time, in lamenting this defeat, say that their countrymen would not have suffered such disgrace had the Breton wrestlers been there.

But it is not merely in the variety of stature, consequent upon the nature of food, that Brittany affords subjects of physiological remark, for here may also be noticed, in a striking manner, the effect of climate upon the complexion. The people of the flat and warm districts in the neighbourhood of Rennes, and other places similarly situated, are often of a decidedly dark complexion, dark-haired, and black-eyed, manifesting, to a considerable extent, the character of a southern climate, as in fact they are situated near the forty-eighth degree of latitude, and inhabit a low country, far from the influence of any mountainous region. Yet, notwithstanding this geographical situation of Brittany, in consequence of the causes already mentioned, the climate varies exceedingly from the eastern to the western extremity. And, accordingly, as we quit the plains of the Haute Bretagne, and proceed towards the hills and colder regions of the west, the dark complexion gradually gives place to one of a much lighter character, the hair being less black, and the eye of some shade of gray. The people also, having for many successive generations followed the same habits, and rarely changed their abode, the influence of climate, as it varies from the warm temperature of the banks of the Vilaine to the cold elevation of Finistère, may be most distinctly perceived, in its several gradations. And even if the different aspect of the soil and its vegetation did not remind us of a change of climate, the various shades of the eye, passing from black to gray, would form an accurate thermometrical scale, wherein the change would be found registered. I am aware there are artificial causes which would operate to counteract this effect of climate, but which it is not now my intention to describe; but as those causes are not at this time in operation among the Breton peasantry, the influence of climate remains undisturbed.

Those who advocate the dark complexion of the Celtic race may imagine that this statement of the prevalence of the dark temperament in some parts of Brittany, affords a confirmation of their system, but I am prepared to show that it will prove the direct reverse; for if there be any portion of the Breton population more purely Celtic than another, it must be that of the mountains, where the Celtic language is

the only one spoken; and here it is that the lightest shade of eye and the fairest complexion is to be found; whereas, in the lowlands, and especially in the vicinity of the large towns, the people are most decidedly of a much darker complexion. And if a Gothic mixture prevails any where, it is most likely to do so in the towns and districts nearest the French borders.

I may be asked, why these effects of the difference of climate are not seen in other countries? in England, for instance; where the surface of the land varies so greatly, and is of course accompanied by a corresponding change of temperature. I answer, that there is no part of England situated so far south, as by the influence of climate alone to produce the dark coloured eye, and therefore the change of temperature cannot be so marked; whereas the whole of Brittany, with the exception of one small headland, lies more to the south than the latitude of Paris; and, in the low and warm districts, the climate has naturally a greater tendency to darken the complexion; and as far as my observations have extended, I have always found that a change to a colder temperature, in consequence of the greater elevation of the land, has precisely the same effect upon the complexion as a similar change occasioned by a more northern degree of latitude.

But although in Great Britain the mere climate would never produce the black coloured iris, nevertheless there are some artificial local causes in operation in Great Britain, which have the effect of producing that hue of complexion, and so powerful is their influence, that they are found to counteract the effects of our northern climate even in the greatest habitable elevations.

I have occasionally seen assertions made by some who had visited the Bas Bretons, that they bear a strong personal resemblance to the Welsh; but, for my own part, I have never been able to satisfy myself of this resemblance, and I rather suspect that it exists only in the preconceived notions of those by whom such statements were made. Indeed I am inclined to think that, if those persons had not been previously acquainted with the identity of language and origin of the two nations, they would never have perceived any

particular resemblance between them. The Welsh, it is true, in many of the poorer districts of the Principality, live upon very hard fare, and so do the Bretons in general; and so far there may be a resemblance, as it is reasonable to suppose that, in this case, a similarity of habits of living will stamp such a corresponding impression upon the countenance, that both shall proclaim the poverty and scantiness of their food; but this will be found to hold good between any two nations whatsoever. In person, however, the Bretons are by no means so robust as the Welsh; and I am disposed to think, that their features approach nearer to those of their French neighbours, than to any other; though really, in some parts of the country, their visages are so very thin and haggard, that it is scarcely possible to discover what they would be, if they were better covered with flesh.

The same persons who make the above assertions respecting the Bretons, assure us also that they resemble the Welsh in their mental disposition, but of this fact I have not made sufficient stay in the country to form a judgment, though I should expect to find that they partake more of the lively disposition of the French. But how can any general description be given of the character of a people, who are allowed, even by their own writers, to vary so much among themselves? For M. Villeneuve, in his *Descriptive Itinerary of Finistère*, says, that the river of Morlaix separates two districts, in which the inhabitants afford a striking example of this difference of character. On the right bank, that is, on the coast of Tréguier, he says, they are more lively and cheerful, their dances are more animated, and their airs brisker, than on the coast of Leon, where they are slower in their gait, and more grave and taciturn, and that there is also a difference in the physiognomy and in the dialect. The same writer says, that as striking a difference occurs in many other towns of the department. He also states, that the people of Plougastel are more robust than those of some other districts.

The truth seems to be, that as the climate of Brittany, as well as the face of the country, varies so greatly, so also does the character of the people, both mental and personal.

It may be said that, as the languages of Wales and

Brittany continue so much alike, why may not the people? To this I answer, that many causes tend to alter the personal character, which cannot affect the language. And even should it be said, that the Bretons have remained to this day very little altered in their national peculiarities, yet we know that the Welsh have undergone numerous changes according to the progress of civilization among them; and, if it be allowed that a gradual change has been proceeding in both nations for twelve or fourteen hundred years, I think it will be unreasonable to expect any very striking resemblance between them at the present day.

Among other proofs of similarity, it is urged that both nations are musical. The pretensions of the Welsh to this character cannot be disputed, as they possess a superb style of national music, forming a class in itself; but then, they have always had the advantage of that noble instrument the *harp*, to preserve and cultivate, both in its melody and harmony; whereas the Bretons, having no such national instrument, are very far behind them in musical science. The bagpipes are frequently seen among them, as they are in other parts of France, and so is the violin, but they can scarcely be called national here, and the performers on those instruments as frequently play French airs as Breton. Therefore, if the music of Brittany was ever the same with that of Wales, (as it must have been in some degree,) it is not surprising that, at the present day, they bear no resemblance to each other. Indeed, it seems impossible to preserve a style of music traditionally, without the assistance of some instrument; for it would seem that the voice, when left to itself, without any instrumental guide to lead and direct it, will in a short time deviate exceedingly from the proper notes which it is intended it should follow; and, in a few generations, would probably lapse into a vicious and imperfect scale, and only chant a monotonous recitative, very different to the established gamut, or division of notes.

The Bretons are certainly fond of singing, but nevertheless they can scarcely be called a musical people in the strict sense of the word; for though they have a great number of songs, and what they call a variety of airs, yet there seems such a sameness throughout them all, that a stranger

might imagine each succeeding song to be only a repetition of the one he heard last, except the time and measure is manifestly different. The airs are all short, simple, and of very small compass; seldom having any thing striking in their composition, or even beyond the most common arrangement of notes; in short, they resemble our old English "Chevy Chase," or "Cease rude Boreas," more than anything else, and that not only in the style of the music, but in the length of the song; for if the tunes are short, the words seem interminable. When I had listened to this Chevy Chase style of singing for some time, I would occasionally ask if they had no other sort of song, and was always answered, that they had a great number; and, upon my requesting to be favoured with one, they would strike up Chevy Chase again with the greatest composure, always appearing to estimate the singing according to the merits of the words, the air being a very secondary consideration.

But still, not liking to be foiled in my object, I have persisted in my inquiry. "Have you no others of a different style to any of these?" "O, yes! a great abundance;" and then comes the same eternal Chevy Chase as before. Did a similarity of musical taste argue an identity of origin, I should say the Bretons are more nearly allied to the English than to the Welsh. Could we not find out some theory concerning the Loegrian Britons from this?

But as it may not be uninteresting to musical readers, I shall, by way of illustration, insert a Bas Breton Air, which is a great favourite with the peasants, and is no bad specimen of their taste; and never having been published, it may be the more acceptable.* The subject of the song is satirical; it was given me by a Breton gentleman, who wrote it down, together with many others, from the mouths of the peasants who sang them. The same gentleman also favoured me with several curious particulars relative to the Bas Bretons, whom he had every opportunity of acquainting himself with, having, during the revolution, resided among them in some of the most secluded parts of the country.

* I am indebted to Mr. Parry [Bardd Alaw] for the Bass to this and the following Air; the originals consisting of the melody only.

ANN HANI GOZ.

Ronde Bretonne.

Ann ha - ni goz eo va dous ann ha - ni

The first system of music is in 2/4 time. The treble staff contains the melody, starting with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature. The lyrics 'Ann ha - ni goz eo va dous ann ha - ni' are written below the treble staff. The bass staff contains the accompaniment, starting with a bass clef and a common time signature. The lyrics are aligned with the notes in both staves.

goz eo zur. Ann ha - ni ia-ouank a zo

The second system of music continues the melody and accompaniment. The treble staff has the melody and the lyrics 'goz eo zur. Ann ha - ni ia-ouank a zo' are written below it. The bass staff has the accompaniment. The lyrics are aligned with the notes in both staves.

koañt ann ha - ni goz è deuz ar - chant ann ha - ni

The third system of music continues the melody and accompaniment. The treble staff has the melody and the lyrics 'koañt ann ha - ni goz è deuz ar - chant ann ha - ni' are written below it. The bass staff has the accompaniment. The lyrics are aligned with the notes in both staves.

goz eo va dous ann ha - ni goz eo zur.

The fourth system of music concludes the piece. The treble staff has the melody and the lyrics 'goz eo va dous ann ha - ni goz eo zur.' are written below it. The bass staff has the accompaniment. The lyrics are aligned with the notes in both staves.

But among all the various specimens of songs and tunes, which exist in different collections, as there are none more simple, so perhaps there are none more ancient than those of the *nursery*. And however slightly, in our maturer age, we may be disposed to esteem them, either in their wording or music, possibly their moral influence is much more extensive than we would always choose to admit. And in those moments of the revival of early impressions, which occasionally occur, when the prejudices of the child rise up and confound the man, the nursery song, and nursery tale, may often prove more powerful in their operation than the lecture of the philosopher or the divine.

But however this may be, I shall perhaps be pardoned for inserting here a Breton nursery song, which was given me by the gentleman who favoured me with the one above, and which has also never been published. Although it cannot pretend to any other influence than that of hushing a Breton child to sleep; yet, in point of composition, it is by no means inferior to some which, among us, are honoured with dissipating the waking moments of those of a larger growth.

The subject, though of the most primitive simplicity, yet is one of vast importance in a Breton nursery. The nurse tells her child that she was going to make a bake-stone cake; but, on looking for the fuel to bake it, she found it as yet uncut in the wood, and the hatchet for cutting it without a helve! Each succeeding verse brings with it some new disaster; the meal is yet unground at the mill; the butter is in the market; the tripod is at the smith's forge, unmade; and the bake-stone plate is yet unbought, in the shop at Perros!

N É N I E.

Ou, Chanson, d'une Bretonne pour endormir son Enfant.





Eunn daou pé tri dervéz a zô

Ema va zoaz kram-poez é go—Achân!

Ema va zoaz kram-poez é go.

Rak va cheñcêd a zô er choad,

Ha va bouchal a zô didroad—Achân!

Ha va bouchal, &c.

Ha va amann zô er marchat,

Ha va bleüd zô choaz ô valat—Achân!

&c.

Ha va spanel zô é Montroulez,

Ha va rozel é Karaez—Achân!

&c.

Ha va zrêbez zô é Landreger,

Ebarz ar chôvel och ôber—Achân!

&c.

Ha va fillik zô è Perroz,

Allas! shetu deñet ann nôz—Achân!

Allas! shetu deñet ann nôz.

It is some two or three days

Since my pancake dough has been put to

[heave—Ah, welladay!

Since my pancake dough has been put to

[heave.

For my fuel is in the wood,

And my hatchet is without a helve—Ah,

And my hatchet, &c. [welladay!

And my butter is in the market,

And my meal is yet unground—Ah,

&c. [welladay!

And my baking-slice is at Morlaix,

And my rolling pin at Carhaix—Ah,

&c. [welladay!

And my tripod is at Treguier

At the smith's forge, in the making—Ah,

&c. [welladay!

And my bake-stone plate is at Perros,

Alas! here the night is come—Ah, wella-

Alas! here the night is come. [day!

The exclamation *achân*! which is pronounced with the last syllable long and accented, had formerly a corresponding word in the Welsh, that is, *ochân*,* *alas*; though it is not now in use. It is, however, retained in the Irish *och aone*, and the Gæic *ochain*. The rest of the words will generally be found, by the Welsh reader, to bear a strong resemblance to similar terms in his native language, as, *toes*, *cram-wyth*, *di-droed*, *gofail*, &c. I do not know that this last word is at present used in any part of Wales to signify a *smithy*, though it must at one time have been the general expression. We still find its plural retained in the name of *Goreilton*, a village in Monmouthshire.

In offering these remarks upon the merits of the Bas Breton music, though I have little doubt of their general accuracy, yet it is but justice to acknowledge, that I have not had opportunities of judging of that of every portion of the

* See Owen's Dictionary.

country, and there may be exceptions. However, upon a future occasion, I hope to have the pleasure of communicating some others from a different quarter of the province.

When travelling in this country, one of my principal objects was the inquiry after ancient manuscripts, both Welsh and Breton, of which a great number are known once to have existed, but are no more to be found. And as there was, in former times, so intimate a connection between Wales and Brittany, it is not unreasonable to suppose, that there was an interchange with regard to their respective books. It is true, that we do not now find any Armorican works in Great Britain, though we know that they once did exist. But it does not follow that no Welsh writings could find their way to France. However, notwithstanding every search I was enabled to make, I have not been fortunate enough to meet with a single manuscript in the Welsh language, nor with any thing of antiquity in the Breton itself; and, from every information I have been able to procure, I despair of their existence in this portion of the kingdom, there being now so many men of learning, and of research in that country, and so interested in Celtic investigations, that were any such manuscripts extant, they could hardly have escaped their observation.

Having been informed that there were some old manuscripts at Morlaix, after visiting several other places, I directed my course towards the town, and soon found my way to the shop of that patriotic printer and antiquary, M. Ledan, who, I understand, is in possession of the only Breton writings of any consideration in those parts, and which he most readily produced and allowed me to examine. They consist of four thin folio pamphlets of paper, copied about the year 1765 from older manuscripts. They are all in the Breton language, and in verse; each pamphlet contains a play, or tragedy, as it is here denominated, having much the character of the old moralities and mysteries which were general all over Europe a few centuries ago, and which are still acted in some countries. The subjects of the above Breton manuscripts are as follows:—

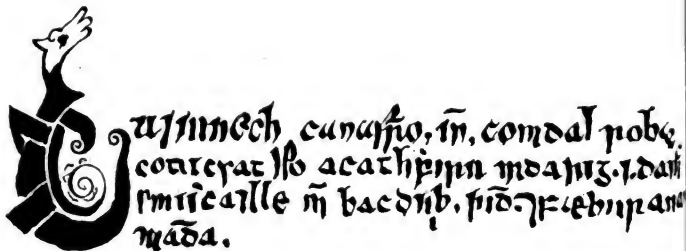
The tragedy of St Trefinnan, Princess of Brittany.

The tragedy of St. Genevieve, of Brabant.

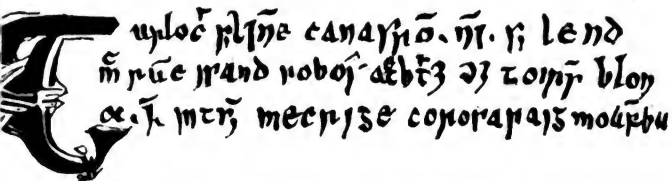
The tragedy of Jacob and Joseph.
And the Passion of our Lord.

I also made inquiries in the Bibliothèque at Rennes, but found nothing there relating to Wales. But though I was not so fortunate with regard to Welsh remains, I was shown a very old, and apparently valuable Irish manuscript; and perhaps it may not be thought irrelevant to give here some account of this Celtic relic.

The work is in small folio, written on vellum, in double columns, in the Irish language and character, and contains 125 leaves. From a note at the beginning, in the handwriting of M. de Robien, who, as M. Maillet, the librarian, informed me, was president of the Breton parliament, and died in 1746, this manuscript contains fragments of piety and of morality, several translations in prose and verse, extracts from the discourses of St. Ambrose, and also *the genealogy of the ancient kings and principal families of Ireland*; and as M. Maillet assured me that he had never seen any person that could understand it, though he had shown it to numbers even of Irishmen, the following examples, copied from different parts of the work, may not be uninteresting, as affording some idea of the style of writing, though they are rather imitations than accurate facsimiles.



The following is from another part of the manuscript;



I have likewise seen other Irish manuscripts of a similar description, and which it is my intention hereafter to notice.

But if I was unsuccessful in the discovery of manuscripts, fortune made me some compensation for my disappointment by introducing me to some of the most literary and national characters of the province; and I had the satisfaction of seeing, that many of the Breton gentry are fully alive to the literature and antiquities of their native country; and there are among them persons actively engaged in collecting and publishing whatever may appear to them interesting as connected with those subjects. As a proof of this spirit, I need only mention the following works, which have either lately left the press, or are at this time in their progress through it;—

Daru's History of Brittany, 3 vol. -	-	-	1826
De Roujoux's History of the Kings and Dukes of Brit-			
tany, 4 vol. -	-	-	1829
Mahe's Antiquities of Morbihan -	-	-	1825
Poignand's Antiquities of St. Malo, &c. -	-	-	1820
Kerdanet on the Language of the Gauls -	-	-	1821
Villeneuve's Descriptive Itinerary of Finistère -	-	-	1828
De Penhouet's Castles of Brittany, a very handsome			
work, now (1829) in the press, &c.			

To which I may add, that M. LE GONIDEC, in addition to the Breton-French Dictionary and Grammar, which he published some years ago, has now lying by him, in manuscript, a French-Breton Dictionary, being the counterpart of the former; and he is only waiting for a sufficient patronage to ensure him against loss, in order to put it into the press; and it is to be hoped he will not be allowed to wait long, as this work, together with the other two, will form a complete repository of the Breton language, as it now exists.

In the conversations which I had the pleasure of holding with the gentlemen before alluded to, as may be supposed, the subjects generally related to the antiquities of our respective nations, and a wish was often expressed to see another edition of the *Myvyrian Archaiology*, and I gave them no small gratification, when I told them that such a work had been in contemplation. I also informed them that, in addition to the relics contained in those volumes, we had also, in the ancient British language, many unpublished manuscripts of great curiosity, and among others, the *Mabinogion*, which probably are the most ancient specimens of romantic fiction in existence, and seem to be among the original models of those tales of chivalry and romance which afterwards spread so widely over the world, and, in their subsequent modifications, directed the taste and sentiment of Europe for so many ages. When I mentioned the existence of those extraordinary tales, and, moreover, that Dr. Owen Pughe had collected, translated, and arranged them for the press, my hearers manifested a degree of delight, which seemed as sincere as it was extreme. And they hoped that, when this work should be put into the press, notice would be given in the French papers, in order that they might avail themselves of the earliest opportunity of possessing it. And then it was that, with shame and confusion, I was compelled to finish my statement, by saying that Dr. Owen Pughe, after all his labours, had been for some years endeavouring to procure a sufficient number of subscribers, merely to defray the expense of printing the work, even without any emolument to himself, and was at last obliged to abandon the idea entirely, for want of support, and that, after all, the *Mabinogion* may never appear in our time, and probably, before another Dr. Owen Pughe appears, the originals will have shared the fate of many others of our most valuable remains.

Such was the humiliating confession which was extorted from me by the anxious curiosity of my Breton friends. Had I been more prepared to meet their inquiries, I might have suppressed the name of the *Mabinogion* altogether; as it is, I can only hope that my bad French, and embarrassed manner, did in some degree prevent their comprehending the full measure of disgrace, which most assuredly attaches to a

country that can allow such valuable remains of antiquity to continue so long unnoticed, and in all probability to be finally lost.*

Notwithstanding the intimate connexion which, in former times, subsisted between the province of Brittany and the principality of Wales, yet, for several ages past, so entirely has all national intercourse ceased between the two countries that, at the present day, there is but little known of Brittany among the Welsh, further than that the inhabitants speak a language similar to their own. But although our countrymen are generally acquainted with this fact, for there is scarcely a peasant in the Principality but has some knowledge of the *Llydawiaid*, and their Celtic tongue, yet there are but very few in any station of life who have a distinct idea of the limits of that language, much less are they acquainted with its dialects and local peculiarities. Indeed, so little is the subject understood among them, that I have known more than one Welshman, on landing at St. Malo, exceedingly surprised and disconcerted at not finding the Breton spoken in that town, or even in the adjacent country.

Should any one, therefore, feel interested in ascertaining the present limits of the Celto-Breton language, if he will take a map of France, or of Brittany, and commencing at the northern shore of that province, opposite to *Guingamp*, draw a line through the little town of *Chatelaudren*, and also through that of *Quintin*, and proceeding in the same direction to the commune of *Noyal*, on the east of *Pontivy*, and from thence through the commune of *Elven*, and of *Muzillac*, to the west bank of the *Vilaine*, opposite to *La Roche Bernard*, and from thence again to the ocean, at the mouth of that river, he will find that he has thus divided the province into two parts, by a line drawn across from sea to sea; to the westward of which, with the exception of the towns, the Celtic is the general language. And of this western division, which is called, in French, *La Bretagne Bretonnante*, that is, the *Breton-speaking Brittany*, the city of Vannes is considered the capital. The Breton continues also to be spoken in the small isolated canton of *Batz*, in the department of

* This prediction has been happily falsified, by the Welsh patriotism of Lady Charlotte Guest.

Loire Inférieure : in the rest of the province, the French is the universal tongue. Nevertheless, it must be stated, that this line is not every where perfectly distinct ; as, in some places, the French and Breton are blended together, and in others, especially in the north, it is so well defined that, in one part of the town, the inhabitants will be found to speak nothing but French, in their general conversation, while in the other, at the distance of a few paces, they speak only Breton.

With regard to the number of persons now speaking the Breton, I have heard a great variety of opinions ; some estimating them at a *million*, and others at not more than *six hundred thousand*. It has even been asserted that, when Bonaparte ordered a census to be made of the various inhabitants of his dominions, according to their respective nations and languages, there were found *eleven hundred thousand* speaking the Celtic. I am, however, rather inclined to doubt the accuracy of this statement : for although it was the policy of that emperor to magnify his resources, yet I scarcely think he could have managed to swell the number to this amount, even though the *Basque* population were considered as belonging to the Celtic race ; for the utmost amount of that people, within the French frontier, hardly exceeds *sixty thousand* souls. But I am disposed to think that, in the present instance, as the statement was communicated in the English language, the error was occasioned by a mistake, easily made in a verbal repetition of the number, and that instead of *eleven*, it should have been *seven* hundred thousand ; as from all the information I have been able to collect, that amount would be nearer the truth than the other ; and, in confirmation of my opinion, I submit the following documents.

In the table of the population of France, as divided into departments, and published in 1791, the only one I have now an opportunity of referring to, the following statement is given of the province of Brittany :—

DEPARTMENTS.				POPULATION.
Loire Inférieure	.	.	.	331,270
Isle et Vilaine	.	.	.	519,169
Morbihan	.	.	.	281,565
Côtes du Nord	.	.	.	523,880
Finistère	.	.	.	285,730
Total of the population of Brittany in 1791,				<u>1,941,614</u>

Now, if we take the whole of Finistère, and such portions of Morbihan and Côtes du Nord as are to the west of the line I have just described, and also the little district of Batz, in Loire Inférieure, and then make reasonable allowance for the Francicised inhabitants of the towns, on the one hand, and for the increase of the Bretonnante population which must have taken place since the year 1791, on the other, it will, probably, be found that seven hundred thousand is a fair computation of the number of persons speaking the Celto-Breton.

At what particular time the Breton became confined to its present limits, is not exactly known; though it is certain that, throughout a great portion of Upper Brittany, it had, at a very early period, given way to the more cultivated Gaulish-Latin. So little was it known in some parts of the upper division in the twelfth century, that the celebrated *Abelard*, though himself a Breton, having been born near Nantes, yet when he was stationed in the diocese of Vannes, complained that he was surrounded by a barbarous people, whose language was hateful and unintelligible to him.

But notwithstanding that the Breton was soon supplanted by its more elegant rival in the upper country, it appears that, in Lower Brittany, at a greater distance from the refinements of the court, it never ceased to be the general language. However, it can hardly be doubted that, at one time, it prevailed to a considerable degree, if not generally, throughout the whole of the province. For it is not probable that Conan Meriadoc, when he took possession of the country, at the head of his victorious legions, would pass by the fertile plains of the Loire and Vilaine, to settle in the uninviting climate of the west. And, accordingly, we find that the seat of the Breton government was chiefly at Nantes or Rennes; and all the descendants of the British prince, which formed the dynasty of the *Conanigènes*, held their court generally at one or other of those places. Yet when we occasionally find them at Vannes, or any other part of the lower division, we do not perceive that any difference is made between the people of the two countries. In fact, whether we take into consideration the settlement under Conan, in the fourth century, or that under Riwal, in the fifth, these insular

Britons must have brought with them their native language, and, although that has been superseded by the Romance, or corrupt Latin, the parent of the present French, yet, if we had no historical intimation of the fact, the existence of its remains in the little canton of Batz, would, at least, afford strong presumptive evidence of its former prevalence in that portion of the province : and, that the present Breton is not merely a remnant of the ancient Gaulish, is, I think, placed beyond a doubt, by the very name which it bears among those who claim it as their original tongue ; inasmuch as they call it the *Brezonek*, or *British*, whereas to the French, they apply the term *Gallek*, i. e. *Gaulish* ; evidently implying that the present Celtic language is not the immediate descendant or representative of that of ancient Gaul.

Another inquiry arises out of this discussion. Did the insular Britons, when they established themselves in Armorica, find there any remains of the ancient Celtic of Gaul, or was the present language entirely imported from Great Britain ? and, also, if there were then any remains of the ancient language, in what parts of the country was it spoken ? In answer to the first part of this inquiry, it may be said, that it is by no means improbable that some remains of the ancient language might have been in existence at that period ; though it was afterwards superseded by, or incorporated with, that of the new colonists. Indeed, some have imagined the previous existence of such a language to have been the cause of the insular Britons selecting that spot for their residence ; but this is merely a gratuitous assumption, or, at least, one resting upon very slender authority, as that country, so rich in natural advantages, could not require any additional inducement whatever to tempt the choice of these wanderers. Others, again, assert that the soldiers of Conan, on their settling in Armorica, intermarried with a people whose language differed from their own ; though the authenticity of this assertion is somewhat shaken by the recital of the expedient which they had recourse to, in order to prevent their children acquiring the language of their Armorican mothers, which was no other than that of cutting off their wives' tongues. The later emigrations would, of course, find there a language resembling that of Britain, which, a short time

before, had been introduced by their insular precursors; but that such a language existed there on the arrival of Conan, rests upon conjecture alone.

In the next place, as it is consistent with probability, that the ancient language of the aborigines was not entirely eradicated in the fourth century; so it may be presumed, that like its Celtic successor, the present Breton, it would be retained in its greatest purity in the mountains and remote parts of the west. As there can be little doubt, that in this province, as well as throughout the whole of the empire, the large towns were very soon placed under the Roman municipal system; and, we may reasonably infer, that together with the jurisprudence and civic customs of Rome, the Latin language would, in a great measure, be introduced, while such of the peasantry as resided at a distance from the influence of those establishments would retain their original Celtic.

With regard to the relative circumstances of the French and Breton languages, at the present day, they may be said to resemble, in many particulars, those of the English and Welsh, in the principality of Wales; the French being the language of commerce, of legislation, and of the upper classes of society, while the Breton continues to be that of the peasantry. With this exception, however, in the resemblance, that, the Welsh is by far a more cultivated and literary language than the Breton; the latter rarely appearing in the press, in works of any consideration; whereas, the Welsh have, at this moment, at least, eight or ten monthly magazines published in their native tongue, besides numerous other publications, of various descriptions. It is, likewise, by no means uncommon in Wales to see the language, to a certain extent, employed in commercial transactions, in advertisements, &c. whereas, I never noticed the Breton applied to any such purpose, excepting, occasionally, in the words *Butun mād*, that is, *good tobacco*, written over a shop door.

But although the Breton has not materially lost ground for several ages, as far as its territorial limits are concerned yet it is evident that the French has been making considerable inroads upon it throughout the interior of the country.

This is very perceptible in the interspersion of French words which continually occur in conversation, as also in the increased number of persons capable of conversing in the French language; and in some places, so corrupt is the vernacular tongue become, that although its grammatical structure retains the Breton character, yet, with the exception of the smaller particles of speech, about one third of the words are French, though generally so disguised by inflections, to suit the genius of the Breton, as not to be immediately recognised; furnishing a living example of the manner in which the ancient Gaulish gradually progressed towards the Latin, until at length it assumed the form of the present French. In most instances, the Breton words borrowed from the French, as they correspond with the modern pronunciation of that language, shew that they are of late adoption, whereas some others seem to have been introduced at a much earlier period, and before the French had begun to dispense with the sounds of the, now, quiescent letters. At the same time I am far from supposing, that because a Breton word is found to correspond in sound with a similar word in French, that it must of necessity have been borrowed from that language; on the contrary, both may have been derived from the Latin, or Gaulish, or some other language, through different channels: and I also feel convinced, that the French have borrowed some words direct from the Breton; and this will not appear matter of surprise when we recollect, that Brittany was for many ages the central point of chivalry and romance; that the Breton knights were among the most eminent that entered the lists; and that the Breton *Lays* were the originals from which the earliest French romances were avowedly translated.

The later encroachments of the French upon the Breton are attributed to two principal causes, both of which may be said to owe their commencement to the effects of the Revolution. The first is the progress of commerce, which having, about that time, from operations not easily defined, received an extraordinary stimulus, was afterwards greatly accelerated by the formation of roads, chiefly intended for military purposes, but which opened communications, and gave facilities for intercourse between districts once completely separated.

The other is referred to the effects of the military conscription, in consequence of which, almost every young man capable of bearing arms was at one time or other called upon to serve in the army, where he would, of course, become in some degree acquainted with the French language. Such of those soldiers, as returned to their native country, would bring with them a knowledge of the French; and thus that language has been introduced into families, which otherwise would rarely have heard it spoken. In a military nation, such as France had become, the number of disbanded soldiers must at all times have been considerable, but especially after the breaking up of Napoleon's immense establishment.

But, although there are but few places in which there is not some person who is more or less acquainted with the French; yet, generally speaking, throughout the whole of Bretagne Bretonante, the Breton is the usual tongue of the people, and it is by no mean uncommon to meet with persons who cannot speak a word of French. I have frequently, when addressing them in that language, and asking for local information, been repulsed with the reply of "*Na gompsann Gallek*," *I do not speak Gaulish*, that is, *French*.

I may here be asked a question, which I should myself have proposed to another upon a similar occasion, had I never visited Brittany; and that is, if the Welsh and Breton languages bear so near a resemblance to each other as is generally understood, where was the necessity of having recourse to the French as a medium of communication? Why not converse with the Bretons in the Welsh at once? To this I answer, that notwithstanding the many assertions which have been made respecting the natives of Wales and Brittany being mutually intelligible through the medium of their respective languages, I do not hesitate to say, that the thing is utterly *impossible*; single words, in either language, will frequently be found to have corresponding terms, of a similar sound, in the other; and occasionally a short sentence, deliberately pronounced, may be partially intelligible; but as to *holding a conversation*, that is totally out of the question. If the difference between the construction of the Welsh and Breton grammars were not enough to prevent this reciprocity of speech, the prevalence of French words in the Breton

would effectually suffice, and yet the strong and repeated asseverations which have been advanced respecting this identity of language require some explanation, otherwise such a positive contradiction as I am now giving them, may seem not only to impugn the accuracy of those who have made the observations, but even to arraign their veracity also. That explanation I persuade myself I shall be able to furnish, having myself been more than once the means of occasioning similar observations; for, whenever I have chanced to fall into conversation with any of the Bas Bretons, I have generally availed myself of the opportunity to make inquiries respecting their native tongue; which, on a comparison of words, I have of course, found to bear a strong resemblance to the Welsh; as for instance, *pen*, a *head*; *troed*, a *foot*, &c. and, occasionally, some particular expression, or turn of phraseology, would be found to have its counterpart in that language; now, it has sometimes happened, that a Frenchman has been present at this lingual barter; whom, not having a very distinct idea of the subject, I have afterwards heard announcing with the greatest confidence, to the first person he has met, that I could speak Bas Breton, and that he himself had heard me speak it! and I have not the least doubt that he would ever after, when the subject should be mentioned, repeat the assertion in the same unqualified terms. I do not mean to say that I am totally ignorant of that language, but the assertion respecting my conversing in it has often rested upon no other foundation than the mere comparison of words just alluded to. That a person unacquainted with either language should fall into such a mistake, upon observing among the speakers a mutual recognition of the same terms, is not to be much wondered at, but I have generally heard even the Bretons themselves make the same assertion, after my having uttered a few detached words in Welsh, and have been much amused with the earnestness with which they have announced the fact to each other, and the remarks occasioned by it. This circumstance has generally produced an interest in my favour, as persons possessed of the slightest historical information would immediately refer the similarity of language to the original identity of nations, though among others not so well informed, I have heard it attributed to another cause not so well calculated

to promote feelings of kindness towards me. I had upon several occasions perceived symptoms of such a misunderstanding, but was for some time unable to comprehend the reason of their existence: however, at length, the whole mystery was fully explained; for one day, on passing through a small village, I stopped a short time in order to make inquiries concerning my route, of such of the inhabitants as I met in the street; and finding them, as usual, speaking their native tongue, I soon entered into a comparison of it with my own; and, as every expression we uttered, produced an additional confirmation of their original identity, I began to flatter myself that I was making no small progress in their good opinion by this development of national affinity, especially when I heard a girl, who had been listening attentively for some time, call out across the street, with considerable delight and surprise, "Father, this English gentleman speaks Bas Breton!" Had the epithet by which the girl designated me, borne the same restricted sense in French as it does in English, I should have suspected by the indifference which the old man evinced upon the occasion, that he thought it rather misapplied, to the dusty and way-worn figure which I exhibited; but he soon made me acquainted with the reason of his cool reception of the communication, and at the same time completely dissipated all my Celtic visions, by coming forward and replying to the girl's exclamation, "Well, and what is there to wonder at in that! England was formerly in alliance with Brittany." In fact, he seemed to know nothing of the early British emigrations, but was alluding to the English troops, which under Edward the Third and his successors, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, had been sent over as partisans in those dissensions by which Brittany was so frequently agitated; and actually supposed that the Welsh which I was speaking was nothing else than English, the general language of England, and which had somehow or other, at the above-mentioned period, become common to both countries; and, from the manner in which he enlarged upon the event of those times, and adverted to the *Combat des Trente*, and other encounters which his countrymen had with the English, it was evident that this idea of my being a descendant of a people who, though not actually enemies, were often rather

troublesome allies, did not enhance his veneration for my dialect, which he never doubted to be the general language of England at this day, and spoken by the king, lords, and commons.

But notwithstanding that this notion has frequently led to discussion, and sometimes to much difference of opinion, yet it is but justice to acknowledge, that neither upon this nor any other occasion, did I ever experience the slightest tendency towards incivility, much less towards insult; on the contrary, whenever I have felt disposed to explain to them the ancient connection betwixt our respective nations, they have always listened to me with much attention and complacency, and as I persuaded myself, not without some feelings of interest.

In addition to these recollections of the English armies being so long stationed in the country, an idea prevails that some of their churches were built by the English, and the relation of this circumstance is not unfrequently accompanied by a significant remark, that the English must be *Bons Catholiques*. There seems to be some truth in the idea, I mean respecting the building of churches; as some of the finest specimens of ecclesiastical architecture, in the northern parts of France, are undoubtedly of English construction, though it is not probable that the English would do much in the way of church building for Brittany, a country in which they had no possessions.

But although the languages of Wales and Brittany are not so absolutely identical, as to admit of the natives of those countries using them in common, yet they certainly do bear so striking a resemblance to each other as to make it evident that they must, at some period not very remote, have sprung from the same origin. But, however, the resemblance between the Welsh and Breton is by no means so striking as that between the Breton and the old language of Cornwall, now extinct, as may be perceived by a reference to the grammars of those languages; nevertheless, the Cornish does in many particulars draw nearer to the Welsh than the Breton, and may be considered as a connecting link between the two.

One of the most remarkable differences exists in the numerals, the Bretons and Cornish counting by *tens*, whereas the Welsh count up to *ten*, in the first decade of the score, and

then by *fixes* in the second ; that is, counting up to *fifteen* in the usual way, and then stopping at that number and forming a new series up to twenty, saying *one upon fifteen, two upon fifteen, &c.* and so through each of the five scores up to one hundred. Now this, it must be confessed, is a most rude and awkward method of calculation ; yet it does at the same time, argue a very remote origin, and affords a strong plea against the assertions of those who maintain that such words as are found in the Welsh resembling the Latin, must of necessity have been borrowed from that language ; for instance, the words *cant*, a *hundred*, and *mil*, a *thousand* ; as they so nearly resemble the Latin *centum* and *mille*, it has been urged that they must of course have been taken from those words. But I think it beyond a doubt, that if the Welsh had learnt the use of these terms from the Romans, they would also have adopted the Roman intermediate arrangement of numerals, and not have used their own less commodious process of calculation ; not to mention that several of the Welsh numerals, as well as multitudes of other words in that language, bear a much nearer resemblance to the Greek than to the Latin, and yet they could not have acquired this resemblance through any intercourse with the Romans, nor does it seem probable that it proceeded from any connection with the Greeks themselves ; therefore the most rational inference is, that such words are the remains of the Celtic, or aboriginal language of Europe, the parent stock from which both the Greek and Latin, as well as several other dialects, have sprung ; and that this original language has been more perfectly preserved in the Welsh than in either of the two, may be seen upon an examination of their etymological structure ; for, although the original roots are more distinctly perceptible in the Greek than in the Latin, yet we find in both those tongues a great number of insulated words which have no etymological connexion with any of their existing roots, nor any thing to direct us to their original formation ; but, on having recourse to their counterparts in the Welsh, we seldom fail of finding the roots, not merely in single words, but branching out into such a number of ramifications, and so interwoven with the language, as to make it evident that they could never have been foreign

terms adopted for the purpose of expressing new ideas, but native words entirely formed of the elements of that tongue, and coeval with its original construction.

In consequence of the similarity between the languages of Cornwall and Armorica, some have imagined the Cornish to be the language of the Loegrian Britons, the third and last Celtic tribe that settled in Britain; but there is no authority whatever for this supposition: on the other hand it is most probable, that Lhuyd has given the right explanation of this fact in the preface to his Cornish Vocabulary, where he attributes it to the introduction of the Armorican by an army of Bretons; who, according to the Welsh Chronicles, came over into this island in the seventh century, under their leader Ivor, son of Alan the Second, king of Brittany; and having in conjunction with the original people, re-established the ancient kingdom of Cornwall, and re-conquered from the Saxons the adjoining county of Somerset, &c., they kept possession of this territory until the year 936, when they were by king Athelstan driven back beyond the Tamar. In confirmation of this statement it may be added, that the people of Cornwall kept up a considerable intercourse with the Bretons, until as late as the time of Elizabeth; and it is even said, that it was not an unusual thing for some of the Cornish families to form matrimonial alliances with those of Brittany; and, probably, if the old national customs of the Cornish could be ascertained, they would be found in many particulars to bear a resemblance to those of the Bretons. I have already noticed, that the Bretons were celebrated for their skill in wrestling, and we know that the same athletic exercise has been long cultivated in Cornwall; and so characteristic of both countries has this gymnastic science become, that our English expression, *a Cornish hug*, has its equivalent in French, in the *saut de Breton*. But notwithstanding this colonization by the Armoricans, and so many years of subsequent intercourse with Brittany, yet the language of Cornwall does bear in its construction so strong a resemblance to the Welsh, in many particulars in which it differs from the Breton, that there can be no doubt that it always retained a great portion of its ancient British character, in consequence of the prevalence of that race which first established itself in the land.

How difficult it is to extirpate the original possessors of a country, when once they have become attached to the soil ! The first inhabitants of Cornwall were of the aboriginal British race ; they were, along with the rest of the neighbouring tribes, brought under the dominion of the Romans, and remained so for upwards of three hundred years ; they were then invaded by the Saxons, and their limits gradually reduced ; then an army of Bretons, with probably a Gaulish mixture, came over from Armorica, and coalescing with the original inhabitants, subdued those Saxons, and recovered possession of the country ; afterwards came a second incursion of Saxons, by this time mixed up with their Danish conquerors, and to a certain extent regained their former dominion ; and, lastly, came the people called Normans, composed of Scandinavians, Gauls, Bretons, Flemings, Piedmontese, &c. and they, in their turn, became conquerors of the country, and established their dominion upon the débris of the Danish, Saxon, Armorican, Roman, and British dynasties. And yet, notwithstanding all these extraordinary vicissitudes, the people of Cornwall, as late as the eighteenth century, spoke their aboriginal Celtic dialect ; so difficult is it to eradicate all traces of the first cultivators of the soil.

In a champaign country, unprotected by natural fastnesses, an agricultural population, when invaded by a superior force, may soon be subdued, but they will rarely be extirpated. Their non-resistance, and general usefulness as labourers, will ensure their protection ; and, becoming the vassals of the conquerors, they will, in the course of time, amalgamate with them, and form one people ; and if the most numerous of the two parties, they will in the end predominate : but in a wild and mountainous country, the aborigines will generally be enabled, either to repulse their invaders in battle, or else to harass and wear them out by a desultory warfare ; continually retiring from one strong hold to another, and leaving them nothing to enjoy as a conquest, but the unsatisfactory possession of a deserted and desolate country. Of course, there are few invading armies, however well appointed, that would not soon retreat from so unprofitable an employment, when the original

inhabitants, returning to their native glens, are in a short time again prepared to give the next assailants a similar reception.

I may be told, that the fate of the American Indians can be cited as an instance of the fallacy of this idea, as they have almost without exception yielded their ancient possessions to the European adventurers, and have never returned; but I answer, that the American Indians were never cultivators of the soil, they were mere hunters; and, when driven from their original haunts, they only exchanged one hunting ground for another, without suffering any material inconvenience. To the Indian, who, in his hunting excursions, rarely slept two successive nights in the same place, the shade of one tree must differ but little from that of another, and his local attachments would be regulated by the plentifulness of the animals which he pursued. Had the aborigines of America been an agricultural people, they would have been more able to defend their country, as well as more determined to retain it; and it is probable, that by some compact or other, either tacit or avowed, they would at this day have claimed their portion of the soil, among the various nations which compose the population of the United States.

Having alluded to the landing of Ifor, son of Alan, in Cornwall, as related in the Welsh Chronicles, published in the Myvyrian Archaiology, if we turn to the preceding part of that account, we shall find, that this expedition into Britain had been previously meditated by Cadwaladr, who went over to Armorica to request assistance of his kinsman Alan; but he was then told by an angel, that the Britons could not recover their ancient dominion until the time should arrive which Merlin had foretold before Uther Pendragon, and this could not be until he (Cadwaladr) had devoted himself to fulfil a long penance, &c. Upon this vision being made known, Alan, king of Brittany, took all the books of the predictions of Merlin, and the predictions of the eagle which prophesied at Caer Septon, (Shaftesbury, also called Caer Paladyr,) in order to see whether they corresponded with the communication made to Cadwaladr. Now, whoever is acquainted with the various compositions

attributed to the bard Taliesin, will recollect that there is among them an ode called *Yr Awdl Fraith*, which is totally different in style from any other poem of that bard, and which, I am disposed to think, will be shown by the above story to be spuriously attached to his name; for instance, in this *Awdl Fraith*, we meet with the following lines;

Geiriau yr angel
Am hedd a rhyfel
A fydd diogel
I Brytania

Mi wn eu cerdded
A'u twng a'u tynged
A'u tro a'u trwydded
Hyd ultima.

"The words of the angel concerning peace and war will be certain to Britannia; I know their progress, their lot, their destiny, their revolution, and their course, unto the last."

Again,

Mawr gefais innau
Yn fy mardd-lyfrau.

"I also found in my bardic books."

Also,

Y daw'r ddarogan.

"How the prediction will come to pass."

And,

Oni ddel rhyw fyd
Yn ol hir benyd.

"But a certain period will arrive, after a long penance."

Yno caiff Brython
Eu tir a'u coron.

"Then the Britons shall have their land and their crown." &c.

It will be admitted, that all these allusions are utterly unintelligible without some explanation beyond what is to be found in the poem itself; but, if any person will take the trouble to compare them with the afore-mentioned passage in the *Chronicles*, he cannot for a moment hesitate in concluding, that both refer to the same event, and more especially as he will find there the selfsame words employed; as, "*Holl lyfrau darogan Myrddyn Emrys—geiriau yr angel—y gymeryd penyd—pan fai gyflawn yn yr amser tyngedfenawl—y cant y Britaniaid eu Braint a'u coron yn ol y dywaid yr angel wrth Gadwaladr*," &c.

Now, as it is beyond a doubt, that the event thus alluded to in the poem, is the very same with that stated to have

taken place in the time of Cadwaladr, the inevitable conclusion is, that the poem cannot be the composition of Taliesin, as that bard must have been dead long before Cadwaladr went to Armorica, and most probably before he was born; for Taliesin flourished in the middle of the sixth century, whereas Cadwaladr was alive in the latter end of the seventh, and this vision appeared to him only eight years before his death.

I am aware that many of my countrymen will regard with any thing but pleasure, this act of spoliation committed upon their favourite bard, and would prefer remaining under their long cherished delusion, rather than have the truth thus abruptly dragged to light. I can most cordially sympathise with them in these feelings of regret and veneration, and can assure them it is no slight or doubtful evidence that would induce me to impugn the genuineness of any composition attributed to Taliesin; but, “Y gwir yn erbyn y byd,” “The truth, even opposed by the whole world.” And let them not be overwhelmed with grief at this discovery; Taliesin’s fame rests upon too solid a basis to be affected by the loss of a few monkish rhymes; nor would his name, as a poet, suffer any injury, if it were disencumbered of some others of a similar description.

But to return to the Breton. Although that language is by no means so identical with the Welsh as to be, either in its oral or written state, intelligible to the natives of the Principality; yet, at the same time, it must be admitted, that there exists a very striking similarity between them, and that, not only in single words, but also in phraseology, and modes of expression; and this is frequently so strong, that it might be thought that the two nations had separated but yesterday. Le Gonidec has, in his Dictionary, given several Breton expressions, together with their parallels in French, in order to show the difference of idiom between the two languages; and, on comparing the former with the Welsh, we find the difference to be very trifling; for example, the expression to *quench his thirst*, is, in Breton, *torri hé zeched*, literally, *to break his thirst*; but the French say, *étancher le soif*, and not *rompre le soif*; whereas, the Welsh is precisely similar to the Breton; *torri ei syched*.

Again: for the Breton *gwel eo gan en*, *I had rather*, literally, *It is better with me*; the French use the expression, *j'aime mieux*, and not *mieux est avec moi*, but the Welsh say, *gwel yw gan i*.

Also, *gwerza war goll*, *to sell upon a loss*, is, in French, *vendre à perte*, and not, *sur perte* but in Welsh it is *gwerthu ar gollod*. *A hed ann deiz*, *all day long*, is in French, *tout le jour*, but, in Welsh, it is *ar hyd y dydd*.

Merch hé mamm eo Katell, *Catherine is her mother's daughter*. This, according to the French idiom, is, *Telle mère telle fille*; but the Welsh have an expression similar to the Breton.

Tro all, *another time*, literally, another turn; for this expression the French use *autrefois*, and not *autre tour*, but the Welsh say *tro arall*.

There are a great many other expressions in which the idiom corresponds so exactly with that of the Welsh, that when we have examined them individually, in this manner, we must feel surprised that the two languages are in other respects so very different; as the words *briz kleñved*, *a slight illness*, the Welsh use the word *brith* in the same qualifying sense; also, *maro eo gand ar vreck*, *he is dead of the smallpox*; here the word *vreck*, or *vreach*, is precisely the Welsh *frech*, which seems to indicate that this disorder was common to Europe previous to the Breton colonization. The Welsh word *frech* is the feminine of *brych*, *freckled*, and in that sense is, in old writings, translated by the Latin word *varius*. Now the terms *varus* and *vara* are, by Celsus and other ancient authors, applied to a certain eruptive disease, by translators sometimes called the measles, and at others, the smallpox; The Welsh, when they intend to distinguish between the two, call the latter the *frech-wen*, i. e. the *white freckle*, and the former, the *frêch-goch*, or the *red freckle*; but, whether the Welsh *frech*, or the Latin *vara*, was the same with the modern *variola*, it is not for me to determine.

The verbs also, in some of their formations, have a resemblance to those of the Welsh, especially the reflective; as *emwiska*, *to dress one's self*; in Welsh, *ymwisco*. Some of the minor parts of speech have, also, a strong resemblance, as *piou-bennag*, *whosoever*, and *pegement-bennag*, *how much soever*, in Welsh, *pw y bynnag*, and *pe gymaint bynnag*.

The Bretons also change the initial letters in composition, like the Welsh, and, in many instances, precisely in the same manner, as *dourgi*, an otter, for *dour ki*, a water dog; *morecran*, a cormorant, for *mor bran*, a sea crow; *les-vab*, a stepson, for *les-mab*; also, in local names, as *Penwern*, for *Penn gwern*, the head of the alder swamp; the difference is but small.

The plurals of nouns are also much alike, especially in the irregular declensions, as, *askourn*, a bone, plural, *eskern*; *blaiz*, a wolf, pl. *bleizi*; *krogan*, a shell, pl. *kregin*; *datad*, a sheep, pl. *deted*; *taro* and *taro*, a bull, pl. *tirvi*; likewise, *gwenanen*, a bee; *gwenan*, bees; *irvinen*, a turnip; *irvin*, turnips. They have also several formations resembling those of the Welsh, as, *dournad*, a handful, from *dourn*, a hand; *karrad*, a cart-load, from *karr*, a cart; *braz*, big; *brazder*, bigness; *bihan*, small; *bihander*, smallness; *teo*, thick; *teoder*, thickness.

The degrees of comparison also correspond, as *uchel*, high; *uchelach*, higher; *uchela*, highest. And even the irregular adjectives are not altogether destitute of some resemblance, as may be seen in the words *good* and *bad*; which, in the Welsh and Breton, as well as many other languages, are found among the irregular words; as *mâd*, good; *gwel*, better; *gwella*, best; *drouk*, bad; *gwaz*, worse; *gwasa*, worst. However, notwithstanding these resemblances, the conjugations of the verbs, together with the declensions of the nouns, and a variety of other grammatical essentials, are so totally dissimilar that, without absolutely studying it as a foreign language, it is impossible, even for a Welshman, perfectly to comprehend, in a connective sentence, more than a very few words of Breton.

I have sometimes been asked whether the language when spoken by the natives, does not in its sound and accent bear some resemblance to the Welsh. To this I could only reply, that the resemblance would altogether depend upon the pre-disposition of the listener: if he were determined upon discovering a likeness, he would as easily perceive it in the language, as others have done in the physiognomy of the two nations, and even in their very costume; but, for my own part, I never could decide, from the mere sound of the

language, whether the speakers were conversing in a dialect of the Welsh, or of the German, or of any other foreign tongue; and how is it to be expected that I should? seeing that the people of Wales, like those of other countries, differ greatly among themselves in their intonations of voice, and provincial peculiarities. The natives of the counties of Monmouth and Glamorgan have, in this respect, very little affinity with those of Flint and Denbigh, while the natives of Breconshire differ quite as much from those of Caernarvonshire and Anglesey. The case is precisely the same in Brittany: each district has its peculiar dialect and tone of voice, and should a resemblance be found to exist between those of any parts of Wales and Brittany, I should feel inclined to attribute it more to the effect of accident, than to any preservation of national resemblance.

If I were asked, what language I was chiefly reminded of, by hearing the Breton spoken by the natives in conversation; I should say, certainly not so much the Welsh as the Gaelic: and this from the frequent occurrence, in the Breton, of a certain nasal pronunciation, very much resembling that so frequently heard in the Highlands of Scotland. This sound, which is unknown to the Welsh, is, in the Breton, expressed by the character *ñ*, and bears some analogy to the French *gn*, in the word *gagner*, and, also, to the *n* in *vin*; though not exactly the same; being, in the Breton, so lengthened out, and strongly accented, as to form a very striking characteristic of that language, as in the words *klañv*, *sick*; *hañv* and *hañ*, *summer*, &c. However, it must be allowed, that although there is not, in the colloquial sound of the language, so close an affinity to the Welsh as some have imagined, yet in the pronunciation of individual words, there is often a considerable resemblance; and whenever I have been reading the Breton aloud to the natives, they have always assured me that I have pronounced it much more correctly than a Frenchman could have done. And, notwithstanding the usual quantum of complaisance to be allowed for on such occasion, I am inclined to think that the assurance I received was not altogether a mere compliment, as, from paying attention to the requisites of reading Welsh, which are also equally essential in reading Breton, that is, of

duly pronouncing every letter, I may have given the words a more intelligible utterance than a Frenchman would, who, from national habit, would make about one half of the letters remain mute, and, of course render his reading unintelligible : and from the distinct manner in which the Breton pronounced several Welsh words, I was inclined to fancy there was a particular aptitude in their organs of utterance, towards the articulation of Welsh ; though, I must confess that, in many instances, their attempts at pronouncing the language were rather *Frenchy*.

There are several letters common to the Welsh, which the generality of the Bretons cannot pronounce ; among others, are the *th* and *dd* ; and such words as, in the Welsh, are written with these letters, are, in the Breton, generally written with a *z*, and pronounced accordingly ; as *gliz*, *dew*, in Welsh, *gulith* ; *bez*, a grave, in Welsh, *bedd*, &c. But I have met, on the southern coast, with persons who pronounced the *th* exactly as we do ; and when I first noticed this peculiarity, so different to any thing usually found among the natives of France, I supposed it proceeded from some lisp or defect of speech, by which an aspirate was formed resembling our pronunciation of those letters ; but, on paying more particular attention, I found that they gave the *th* as perfect a sound as we do in Wales or England.

The Welsh, *Ll* is also unknown to the Bretons. Whether the French *ll* had, originally, any affinity to this sound, I cannot say, although, when we see how variously some of the old French names are written, which commence with the letter *l*, as in the name *Lothair*, which is written *Clotair*, *Chlotar*, and *Lhotar*, &c., it would seem as if they intended to express some similar sound to the Welsh *ll*. This aspirated mode of pronouncing the letter *l* is supposed to be, at present, peculiar to the Welsh ; but a gentleman, whose well known accuracy and philological knowledge must entitle his remarks to every attention, has assured me, that a pronunciation, if not exactly similar, at least very nearly approaching to it, exists at this day among some of the tribes of the Caucasus.

The Bretons, also, occasionally, make use of the *sh*, or *ch*, though it is asserted that this sound is a modern innovation, being, formerly, that of *s* ; and it is rather singular

that the same idea prevails among the Welsh respecting that pronunciation in their native tongue; for example, the word *siarad*, to talk, is, in many parts of the Principality, pronounced *sharad*; but, in others, that sound is exclaimed against as a modern corruption. The notion, I believe, originated with Lhuyd; and although in some parts the *sh* may seem a vicious pronunciation of the *s*, yet, with every deference to the authority of that eminent philologist, I am inclined to think that it is by no means of modern introduction, but that it always existed in most of those districts in which it is at present heard; and, probably, in some parts of Brittany, it has always formed a part of the language, though, like the *th*, which I heard in the neighbourhood of *L'Orient*, it had never the good fortune to be acknowledged as such by grammarians.

Although the Bretons have not the aspirate *h*, they have the guttural *ch*, in common with the Welsh. That sound does not belong to the French: and, in the Breton, it is often introduced into words in which it is not used in the Welsh; as also, in the mutations of the *c*; for example, *Poaz a-walch eo ar chig*, the meat is done enough; here the Welsh would say, *Poeth ei wala yw yr cig*. But in the dialect of Vannes, this guttural pronunciation is affected in a greater degree than in any of the others, as in the word *daroueden*, a tetter, which, in Vannes, is pronounced *derchouiden*; and sometimes it seems as if it marked the etymology of the word more distinctly, but in other instances, the *ch* is, doubtless, a corrupt and superfluous addition. It may be here proper to explain, that the Breton is divided into four dialects, named after the cantons in which they are spoken; which are Vannes, Cornouailles, Tréguier, and Léon, called in the Breton, Gwened, Kerneo, Treger or Landreger, and Léon. In order to decide which of these approaches nearest the Welsh, or whether any one does so more uniformly than the others, it would require an examination more elaborate than is compatible with the limits of the present article.

The acknowledged affinity existing between the languages of Wales and Brittany, has often led to a supposed discovery of other resemblances; with respect to many of which, I

have already expressed my conviction that they are altogether fanciful, or, if they really do exist, that they are more the effect of accident than of national affinity. Such, in a great measure, may be the case with regard to ancient customs and superstitions, in which, although a perfect similarity may be discovered, yet it is to be attributed entirely to an identity of religious ceremonies, once common to all Roman Catholic countries. Some superstitious usages may, possibly, have had their origin in Druidism; but as both countries have, together with the rest of Europe, been so many ages under the dominion of the church of Rome, and as we know that the Welsh still retain many customs derived from that communion, though they are now ignorant of the fact, we should be careful not to attribute such characteristics to an earlier and more original state of the two nations.

Of all the various ceremonies of a people, those of marriage are amongst the most important, both in their mode of celebration, and in their consequent effect upon the relations of society; I shall, therefore, subjoin an account of the marriage ceremonies of that part of Brittany called Bas Léon, which was given me by M. Le Gonidec, and which, some years ago, was read by him before the Académie Celtique, now the Société Royale des Antiquaires de France; but whether it was ever printed, he could not inform me.*

MARRIAGE CEREMONIES OF BAS LÉON.

“When the father of a family has fixed his mind upon a young woman whom he would wish to see married to his son, and the latter has consented, and declared himself to that effect, the father and son go both together to the house of one of those inter-nuncios called in the language of the country, *Baz-valan*, which signifies *Broom-walking-stick* a name these persons have acquired from their habit of carrying a walking-stick made of the wood of that shrub.

“This envoy, having received his instructions, proceeds to the residence of the young woman, and announces to the family the object of his visit. If the proposed alliance meets the approbation of her relatives, they immediately begin to signify the same by a corresponding treatment of the ambassador. For this purpose, they set about

* The original French MS. in the handwriting of M. Le Gonidec, remains among Mr. Price's papers. It is entitled “Notice lue à l'Académie Celtique, aujourd'hui Société Royale, des Antiquaires de France, en 1807, par M. Le Gonidec.”—EDITOR.

preparing him a dish of soup, into which they put a piece of salt pork, together with some eggs, and, should they be near a village, they send to fetch a bottle of wine. If, perchance, there should be no meat in the house, and they reside too far from any other dwelling to borrow of their neighbours, they then put the baking plate on the fire, and proceed to make a bake-stone cake. This eatable, being a greater rarity in the district whereof I am speaking, than in any other part of Basse Bretagne, is regarded as a dainty mess, and worthy of being presented to the most delicate palate. But when the proposed alliance does not give satisfaction, they content themselves with merely offering the ambassador some hasty pudding, by that means giving him to understand, that they dispense with more ample details upon the subject of his mission.

“ If the envoy has been well received, as soon as he has finished his splendid repast, he enters upon the business of his visit. After having extolled the unspotted lineage of his principal, his fortune, his capacity, and his general merits, he inquires whether it is the intention of the family that the young woman should reside at her paternal home, after her marriage, or at that of her husband. Should they choose to keep her at home, he inquires what portion of the household management they mean to make over to her; and also what dowry in money they mean to ensure her. Supplied with these particulars, he returns to the father of the young man, and renders an account of his embassy.

“ When the preliminary conditions are approved of by the young man's father, he again despatches the ambassador to the young woman's family, in order that they may fix a day for making the *guel-aden*, i. e. the *visit*. Upon this occasion, the future spouse, accompanied by six or eight of his nearest relatives, all mounted on horseback, and suitably equipped, proceed to the house of the intended bride, where, after partaking of some refreshments, the two families proceed together, to take a survey of the whole contents of the house, care having been taken to lay open for inspection, the chests, and cupboards, and all the household stores. From these, they proceed to the stables, beast-houses, and barns; and from thence to the corn-fields; not forgetting to cast a look at the dunghill heap. Before separating, they appoint a time and place for meeting to arrange the marriage contract, and generally make choice of some inn in the neighbouring village or town. There they determine upon the dowry to be given on either side, and also what portion of the household management shall be assigned by the party in whose paternal house the future residence has been fixed, which portion varies according to the property, and number of children likely to be married and reside in the house. If only one is to be married, it is usual to give up one half, or one third of the household affairs. If two are to be married, each receives a third. If the farm is considerable, and there are several children, it frequently happens that there are more than two married and living in the house, and, in that case, each receives one sixth only. For the purpose of ascertaining the amount of that half, third, or sixth, as the case may be, some competent person is fixed upon, by the consent of all parties, to make a valuation of the whole property, comprising the moveables, stock, and crops on the ground. The half, third, or sixth of which estimate, is the sum in proportion to which the young couple calculate their share in the farm. It may, perhaps, be asked, how the young couple, upon their first entering into the business of *farming*, are to find money for the payment of sums for which they must be called upon, and which upon that occasion are often very considerable.

But, in order to meet this call, the parents at first agree to give each of the parties a certain marriage portion : this money goes towards the first expenses ; and for the discharge of what may be afterwards advanced for them, the parents allow them, fixing a certain sum to be paid annually until the whole is cleared. Private interest is never allowed to interfere in these contracts : from the moment the first money is invested, the young people have their share in the produce of all that is sold in the markets and fairs, in proportion to their half, third, or sixth, according to the original agreement. They are also obliged to furnish, towards the general stock, their portion of the sums necessary for the purchasing of farming implements, cattle, &c. There is neither steward nor cashier ; whoever has been to market, on returning home, places on the table the produce of the sale ; the division is made on the spot, and every body is content.

"The estimate being now completed, the two young people, together with the mother of the young woman, proceed to the neighbouring town, to purchase the ring, or as it is jocularly termed, *to buy the halter, prena ar chabestr*. The ring is generally ornamented with two hearts united. They also, at the same time, purchase the young lady's sash ribbon, and other articles of the toilette, preparatory to the wedding.

"Eight days previous to the wedding, the two families go and invite their respective friends and relatives to the feast ; that invitation extends to all the inhabitants of the house, great and small, both masters and servants ; and in order that the invited may have no doubt upon the subject, they never forget to request them to *put the key under the door*. The persons thus invited, think they would be grievously wanting in respect, if they did not bring with them every individual member of their household, persuaded that they cannot show greater honour to the young couple, than by contributing all in their power towards augmenting the number of their guests ; and in this manner, these assemblages generally consist of two or three hundred persons, and it is not uncommon to see four hundred ; I, myself, once assisted at a marriage feast, where there were *five hundred* present. It is the invariable rule to provide a cask of wine for every hundred guests.

"As there never is, in any of the houses of the peasantry, a room sufficiently large to contain such a number of people, it is customary to erect one or more very long tents ; the interior of which, or at least the upper part, is generally hung with the finest cloth the house contains ; over the place occupied by the young couple are suspended coronets of flowers, garlands, and bouquets ; the cloth is covered with images of the saints coarsely painted ; the tables are formed of ladders, placed end to end, and resting upon stakes, with boards to cover the staves ; and long pieces of cloth for table cloths ; the seats are formed of planks, likewise fixed upon stakes, and placed on each side of the table.

"The wedding day having arrived, the bride completes her toilette at a very early hour, in order to be ready to receive her intended spouse, when he comes to conduct her to the church. Having at length made his appearance, accompanied by a great number of his relatives and friends, he stops at the door, but finds it closed ; then a couple of bards, one of whom is shut up in the house with the young woman's family, and the other stationed out-side the door at the head of the young man's party, commence a dialogue, half serious, half comic. Each of these bards carries in his hand a walking-stick of a dark colour, ornamented with ribbons, and with an ivory head ; after saluting all the spectators with a most magisterial countenance, the

bard of the bridegroom commences his discourse by demanding the young lady in marriage ; the other bard within the house pretends not to understand his meaning ; the former then repeats his demand, and with much emphasis descants upon the merits of the bridegroom ; the other, in like manner, breaks out into a most extravagant panegyric upon his protégée, and exalts her character beyond all possible comparison ; the dispute soon grows warm, and the readiness which these poets possess in this improviso style, frequently causes the dialogue to last for a couple of hours. He who pleads for the bridegroom urges the claims which his patron has upon the young lady's heart, in consequence of the strength of his affection and the unceasing attentions by which he has constantly evinced it ever since he knew her ; but the other continually discovers some new reason for refusing her to him, till, at length, some unanswerable argument, or well-timed sally of wit, decides in favour of the bridegroom.

" Having thus approached the termination of the dispute, the young lady's bard asks the other, if he would recognise the object of his search were he to see her ; the other answers, that he could not possibly be deceived, so matchless are her charms ; the door then opens, and they present to him a harsh-featured old woman ; and, as she has not been selected for this purpose on account of her beauty, she does not take any extra pains to improve her appearance ; this, when well managed, always causes the most immoderate merriment from all parties, excepting the disappointed bard ; he, on the contrary, throws himself back with horror, and says, the person he is in quest of is quite a different being, is full of youth and beauty, and abounds in all desirable qualities ; they then bring out a very little girl, and ask him if that is the person he seeks, but his chagrin is scarcely less upon this than the former occasion ; having exhausted this kind of badinage, they at last bring out the real bride, whom the bard immediately acknowledges, and addresses in a complimentary harangue in the name of the bridegroom, from whose hands he receives a ribbon sash, which he immediately ties about her waist ; in order, as he says, that there may be no further mistakes with regard to her identity.

" These discourses which take up so much of the day, are so interlarded with scraps of Latin, and quotations of various kinds, and put together in so incoherent and absurd a manner, and at the same time with so much farcical humour, and often-times genuine wit, that to those who understand the language, the effect is of the most amusing description.

" The dialogue being now finished, both parties set off for the church, preceded by the bagpipes. The ceremonies upon this occasion differ but little from those of the rest of France. I would only observe, that, at the time of the offering, there are placed upon the altar a quantity of cakes and several bottles of wine, which are there blessed by the priest, together with the wedding-ring. It may also be remarked that, when the bridegroom places the ring upon his spouse's finger, she takes care to close her hand in such a manner that it shall not pass the second joint, believing that, by this precaution, she will be able to maintain a decided ascendancy over her husband.

" The marriage ceremony being concluded, the whole party set off from church, to the sound of the bagpipes, and, on arriving at the house, seat themselves at the tables, but this first meal being only a breakfast, consists merely of tripe, trotters, pettitoes, or some such light eating, together with some wine ; and, as all the guests do not arrive at the same time, the breakfast is prolonged for the space of

two hours, the tables being left continually supplied for those who may choose to eat. When the whole of the guests have at last arrived, they all enter the tents and sit down to dinner. The new married couple place themselves at the head of the table, and on each side of them the brides-maid and brides-man, or friend of the bridegroom ; and, next to these, are placed the most honourable of those who are invited. The first course consists of nothing but pottage, from one end of the table to the other, and as the table consists of only the breadth of a ladder, the dishes are all placed in a line with each other, and only one sort of dish is placed upon the table at the same time. After the pottage has been removed, the boiled meat is brought on, and that is again replaced by salt pork and boiled pudding ; then come beef, mutton, veal, all roasted in the oven ; after these they bring in a mess of wheat and rice, with raisins interspersed, also cooked in the oven : afterwards pies, plums, and grapes, and various kinds of cake for the dessert.

"Dinner being ended, one of the heads of the families arises, and having obtained silence, says grace, and puts up a prayer for the prosperity of the young couple, not forgetting those friends who have died within the year. As soon as he has re-seated himself, they commence singing Latin hymns, to which succeed canticles in the Breton language, and lastly songs.

"Gradually the younger part of the company make their escape from the table, and proceed to the place appointed for dancing, which is kept up to the sound of the bagpipes ; or, in default of that, to the voice alone : sometimes they join in a circle, the men presenting the little finger, and the women the second finger ; and, occasionally, they separate two and two, and skip along one before the other.

"The two new married people, instead of going to join in the dance, upon leaving the table, place themselves on each side of the door of the court, where the bridegroom, holding a bottle in one hand, and a silver cup in the other, presents some of the wine which had been blessed by the priest, to those whose residence is too distant to admit of their staying to supper ; and who are, on that account, making preparation for departing ; the bride, at the same time, offering some of the cake, of which every person who passes breaks off a piece.

"When there are no more left than those who intend staying to supper, the young couple proceed to join the dancers ; but, during the whole of that evening, they are not to dance with any but each other : when the hour of supper has arrived, all the company seat themselves at the tables with the exception of the new married couple ; who, after having been waited upon during the course of the day by their nearest relatives, now, in their turn, wait upon those, without once sitting down during the whole time ; and, at the conclusion of the supper, they proceed together, each carrying a glass of wine, and walking round the tables, drink the health of all the guests : after this little mark of attention they retire to the house to divest themselves of their wedding habiliments, where they are soon followed by their friends : and there, throwing themselves on their knees at the feet of their parents, they ask their blessing : that act of piety, as well as of filial submission, being performed, the bride, all in tears, preceded by the brides-maid, who holds a lighted candle in her hand, approaches the company, and takes leave of every one individually, kissing them all without exception, each of whom expresses some particular wish for her welfare, one wishes her health, another happiness, another long life, &c. Having satisfied herself that she has not overlooked or forgotten

any one present, she takes the hand of the brides-maid and withdraws : the bridegroom next approaches, preceded by the brides-man, who also carries a lighted candle ; and he, in like manner, takes his leave of the company individually, and receives the good wishes of all, but it is remarked that he never sheds tears.

“ When the young couple have thus withdrawn from the company, and taken their final leave, one of the assistants commences singing the ‘Veni Creator,’ and is soon joined by the others, thus forming a choir, which, from the effects of the wine drank during the day, is not always of the most harmonious description : that Latin hymn is succeeded by songs, and the festivities are often prolonged till daylight.”

It may be supposed, that in such a general uproar as must by this time have grown into existence, should any of the inmates of the house feel disposed to sleep, it would not be a very easy matter so far to indulge themselves ; however, if such there should be, we are informed that it is the duty of the brides-maid and brides-man to afford them protection ; and, for this purpose, they station themselves in that part of the house where their services are most likely to be required, each holding a lighted candle without a candlestick ; and as long as they can keep their candles burning, so long does their authority continue ; and sometimes, such is the unwearied pertinacity of the company, that they are in danger of burning their fingers. But the arrangements of a Breton establishment being in many respects different from those of our peasantry, I am here under the necessity of omitting some portion of the present description, inasmuch as, in order to render them intelligible, it would be necessary to enter into such explanations as the space already occupied by this article would scarcely admit of. Suffice it to say, that the persecutions which our English grandmothers were obliged to submit to, and from which the present generation has been happily rescued, are still in full force among the Bas Bretons ; and, although that of throwing the stocking is not mentioned among the number, there are substitutes for it by no means less vexatious.

“ Very early the next morning the young people are made to breakfast on a kind of milk pottage, whereof all the bits of bread are attached together by a thread ; each person is furnished with a bone instead of a spoon, and they are expected to eat the whole of the mess to the last morsel ; and, by this time, the protecting candles having been burnt out, these two people are abandoned to the mercy, or rather the mercilessness, of their persecutors.

"On the day after the wedding, the new married couple put on deep mourning, and cause a solemn service to be chanted, for the souls of their deceased relatives.

"If there are bees kept at the house where a marriage feast is celebrated, care is always taken to dress up their hives in red, which is done by placing upon them pieces of scarlet cloth, or of some such bright colour; the Bretons imagining that the bees would forsake their dwellings if they were not made to participate in the rejoicings of their owners; in like manner they are all put into mourning, when a death occurs in the family."

Those who are acquainted with the national customs of the Welsh, would, on reading the foregoing description, be disposed to consider it as nothing more than that of a real Welsh wedding; such as, till within a few years, was very general in the Principality, with only such slight variations as are necessary to adapt it to the character of the country in which the scene is laid; and it must be allowed, that in the general outline there is a striking resemblance; though, on a closer examination, we shall find that there are very few particulars in which there is an exact similarity: however, in the most characteristic feature of the whole ceremony, the reception of the bridegroom and his party on the morning of the wedding, the closing of the door against them, and the rhyming altercation which then takes place, together with the immense cavalcade assembled upon the occasion, the whole proceedings are literally identical with those of the Welsh. Whether this whimsical custom does, or ever did prevail in any other country, I have never learned: but while the similarity on the immediate arrival at the house is so striking, yet, in many subsequent particulars, there is a considerable difference; for instance, in Wales, instead of the bride being voluntarily brought out, the besieging party have to make their way into the house as well as they can, and this is generally effected by stratagem, and even then they have the mortification of finding that she has been most studiously concealed from them; and, having ascertained this to be the case, they commence a general rummage for her amongst the furniture of the house, and so well is this plot of hiding the bride concerted, that I have more than once known it so completely baffle all attempts at discovering her, that the forenoon has entirely passed away in this ridiculous occupation before she could be found, so that

the parties not being able to reach the church till long after the close of the canonical hours, have of course been obliged to defer the ceremony until the following day. No doubt, the Marriage Act which limited the solemnization of matrimony to the forenoon hours, must have sadly trenched upon these nuptial amusements of our countrymen.

But, as if all this rhyming and rummaging were not sufficient to peril the performance of the marriage ceremony, the Welsh have recourse to an additional expedient ; that of racing and chasing each other all over the country, on their way to church. For this purpose, the bride is mounted on a pillion behind the person acting as her father, who, escorted by her friends, together with those of her intended spouse, sets off from the house for the parish church, but when he comes to a convenient spot, instead of proceeding along the proper road, he sets spurs to his horse, and gallops off in a contrary direction, along some of the numerous cross lanes which intersect the country, apparently with every intention of carrying off the bride. Upon this, the bridegroom, together with the whole troop of his attendants, set off in pursuit ; while the other party are no less active in pressing forward to protect the fugitives, and prevent their capture : and, for the more effectual carrying on this system of attack and defence, it is necessary that the whole country should be scoured in every direction, in order that the lanes and highways may be properly occupied by the pursuing party, to prevent all possibility of escape ; and, also, that gaps may be made in the fences by the others, and the gates thrown off the hinges to enable the bride and her protector to pass across the fields and avoid the ambuscades of their opponents, and then woe to those gates and hedges which happen to stand in the way. Sometimes it will happen that the route lies over a mountain or common, and as it is a matter of principle with the guardian to be continually endeavouring to effect an escape with his ward, so here upon open ground, the movements of the parties may be seen to great advantage ; and the appearance of such a number of men and women, all smartly dressed, and galloping about in every direction, gives the whole scene a most singular appearance, especially as the Welsh women, from their being such bold and expert riders,

keep up and mingle with the foremost of the party, and enter into the spirit of the tumultuous procession in the most animated manner. It is scarcely possible to imagine any thing more wild and irregular than the various movements of the whole company upon this occasion. It is a favourite amusement with Welsh children to set a piece of paper on fire, and when it has ceased flaming, to watch the little sparkles running along the tinder, which they call a *priodas wyllt*, and I do not know any better representation of the hurry and confusion of a Welsh wedding.

The existence of these customs, in whatever country they may be found, indicates a state of society in which the commercial value of time is but little understood, and the pressure of care and labour but lightly felt: a state which the toiling mechanic would regard with feelings of envy, as being exempt from the evils of unceasing exertion; and the speculating merchant would look upon with contempt, as incompatible with the improvements of commerce.

Whether such customs maintain the same ground in Brittany as formerly, I never thought of inquiring: but in Wales they are vastly more rare than they were a few years ago; for the Welsh, having assumed a character much more thoughtful and serious than they once possessed, do at the present day evince a dis-inclination towards numbers of amusements, which occupied the attention of the last generation as matters of the most important concern. This difference of disposition has been partly occasioned by the progress of industry, and a better estimate of the value of time; but more especially it is the result of that change of religious opinions and habits, which of late years has been so visible throughout the country.

In the preceding description may be seen notices of national customs among the Bretons, which, though simple and patriarchal in a high degree, yet must have the most pernicious effects in their influence upon the interests of agriculture. I allude to that joint occupation of the farm by several branches of the family, all living under the same roof, and mingled together in one household, than which nothing could be devised more effectual for the purpose of preserving every thing in its primitive state, and barring out

every prospect of improvement. Whether this custom ever existed in any part of Wales, I am unable to state, but, as I do not recollect seeing any allusions to it in the Welsh Laws, I conclude it never could have been general and systematic, as in Bas Léon. However, a divison of land equally detrimental, once prevailed in several parts of the kingdom ; in that practice of several occupiers taking a tenement together, and ploughing the land by alternate ridges, and dividing the crop accordingly ; some remains of which practice are said to be still extant in the remote parts of Scotland, in what is termed *run-rigg*, and which, if possible, had a worse tendency than even the Breton custom, as it not only impeded every progress towards improvement, but must necessarily have had a deteriorating operation, offering no inducement even to retain the few advantages of soil which might already exist.

During those long ages of intellectual gloom which immediately succeeded the extinction of classic literature in the West, however a few smouldering embers might occasionally cast a glimmer around, when disturbed by the accidental tread of some solitary wanderer, yet it was but to make the darkness more perceptible, and betray the desolation of the scene ; and so effectually had all traces of Roman learning been obliterated, that while the language itself had become unintelligible, even the very books in which it was contained had disappeared, and the ideas once conveyed through its medium had been entirely effaced ; the historical recollections, the poetic imagery, the traditions, mythology, and all the characteristic features of ancient learning, had completely vanished, without leaving any definite system to replace them.

While we regard this state of mental night, in which the last rays of classic literature had been extinguished, and even its very ashes raked together, at the knell of the Gothic curfew ; we discover, in one secluded spot, indications of another flame, which, in succeeding ages, was destined to blaze forth and light up a theatre far more brilliant, and more spacious, than that which had been demolished in the overthrow of the Roman power ; for in the remote and isolated province of Brittany, we find a style of thought and

imagination arising into notice, totally new in its character, and altogether distinct from any thing the world had previously been acquainted with ; for it was in this province of Brittany, that the character of thought known by the term *Romantic* first appeared on the continent of Europe. Brittany, in fact, was the very cradle of *Chivalry* and *Romance*, and in that country were located some of the most essential materials of romantic fiction. There was the enchanted forest of *Brocéliande*, inhabited by the fairies, where the celebrated Merlin was held imprisoned by the mis-directed power of his own incantations. There were the illusory waters, among which the *Lady of the Lake* dwelt in her invisible and enchanted palace ; there was the castle of the *Joyeuse Garde*, the residence of the gallant Launcelot du Lac ; there was the *Val sans Retour*, and the fountain of *Baranton*. In short, there was, at least, the frontier district of fairy-land itself, where *Morgana*, the fairy queen, held her elphin court, amidst such splendid scenes as mortal eyes were rarely privileged to view.

The wood of Brocéliande, it is true, though still in existence, no longer displays those waving honours which distinguished it in the days of Merlin, and the voice of that magician is now but seldom heard within its precincts ; the mouldering turrets of the Joyeuse Garde no longer echo the acclamations of the tournament ; the *Dame du Lac* has drawn closer around her the veil of secrecy which envelopes her abode ; and the fountain of Baranton has ceased to obey the accustomed spell ; but the style of thought and tone of sentiment once awakened by their influence, still exist, under their various forms and modifications, in the numberless works of imagination which have since appeared in the world of fiction ; for, with very few exceptions, whatever work of imagination we examine, from Shakspeare to Sir Walter Scott, it is not the style of the classic writers that has been employed to give an interest to the subject, but, on the contrary, a species of imagination totally distinct from, and independent of, that displayed in those models. Virgil and Ovid could have had no more conception of the character of thought contained in the *Castle of Otranto*, or the *Bridal of Triermain*, than they could of the architecture of a Gothic cathedral. This modern

style of composition, under whatever form it may appear, whether as shown in the playful fantasies of the *Midsummer Nights' Dream*, or the mysterious gloom of Mrs. Radcliffe's novels, dates its commencement at the period when the tales of chivalry and romance began to succeed the literature of the classics : and although that literature has since been recovered, and also cultivated with unspeakable advantage to the interests of general knowledge, yet it has never been able to re-instate itself in that paramount authority which it once maintained over the powers of fancy. The world has now tasted of a richer and more palatable repast, and will never more relish the vapid mythology of the classics. The Greek and Latin originals, together with their translations, will still be read with profit as well as pleasure, but they will never more be imitated as models of taste and fancy : for what original work of imagination could possibly acquire any degree of popularity in the present day, or even escape actual indifference, if it exhibited no other sentiment than that found in the classic writings ? And although we have seen such classic imitations attempted, both in the French and English languages, (and these, like all other exceptions, only serve to confirm the rule,) yet, generally speaking, if they have possessed any particle of interest, it has been produced by the portion of modern feeling and sentiment added, perhaps unconsciously, by the authors, which has given a currency to the obsolete ideas of the ancients. And whatever merit those so highly extolled productions of antiquity may possess as efforts of genius, or as instances of logical and grammatical accuracy, yet it must be confessed, that, at least in one most indispensable requisite, they are irretrievably and hopelessly deficient ; and that is, the due estimation of the female sex. The existence of this very sentiment alone, places the tone of feeling and character of chivalry, infinitely above that produced by the most celebrated works of antiquity : it has, in fact, reformed and corrected the impulses of the heart, and given a new direction to the progress of taste and imagination.

But while we are attributing this beneficial change to the institution of chivalry, it must not be concealed, that, for the existence of such immense superiority of refinement,

that system is indebted to a far more exalted principle than any that could have operated in the pagan institutions of Greece and Rome. And, however the genuine purity of the Christian doctrines may have been impaired, amidst the tumult of those unsettled times which immediately succeeded the incursions of the northern hordes, yet so powerful and quickening are the principles of Christianity, that even degraded and reduced as that religion was in those days of ignorance and superstition, the small leaven of it, which remained, was sufficient to produce the most salutary effects upon society ; and to influence the dispositions of a mass of turbulent barbarians, at that time, scarcely escaped from the marauding habits of their roving ancestors, so as to communicate to them a character, in many particulars, vastly superior to that which had been acquired by the most celebrated nations of antiquity, after ages of instruction in the schools of their boasted sages and philosophers.

Under the guidance of this principle, therefore, the system of chivalry contributed most essentially towards meliorating the state of the world. And this very act, of exalting the condition of women, and giving them their proper rank in society, has done more towards humanizing mankind than all the learned ethics of the profoundest philosophers, and may be considered as the first and most important step towards general civilization ; and those laws of knighthood which effected this beneficial change in the social condition of women, and made them the principal objects of esteem and protection, though dependent upon opinion alone for their enactment and execution, were amongst the wisest and most efficient ever promulgated. When, therefore, in tales of chivalry, whether of romance or of reality, we read of the fervid devotedness of a young knight towards the object of his affections, the extravagant expression of his attachment, and the actual dangers he is continually seeking and encountering, in order to recommend himself more strongly to her favour ; however we may smile at the description of such exuberant feeling, yet the excess was most assuredly on the right side, and its consequences most beneficial to society ; for while, in those days of barbarism, it operated as a protection against the injustice and brutality too prevalent where

this spirit of chivalrous honour was unknown ; in process of time it gradually settled into that system of politeness and good-breeding, which is ever the distinguishing feature of civilized life.

In short, when we examine the institutions of chivalry, we may safely venture to pronounce, that they are the sources from which our present ideas of honour, in the best acceptation of the word, are derived ; and whatever modifications those ideas may have undergone, according to the various channels through which they have descended to us, yet it would be no very difficult task to trace back the current of all our high and courtly feelings, from the finished gentleman of the present day to the no less polished model of the old school, and from thence to the generous and high-spirited cavaliers of the Stuarts, the courteous and gallant knights of Elizabeth and the Tudors, until we come to the Bayards, the Du Guesclins, and all the preux chevaliers, the splendid ornaments of knightly honour.

Reference has already been made to the origin of this system among the people of Brittany, as far as its continental relations are concerned. If we proceed to contemplate its operations during the time of its greatest lustre, though we shall perceive its influence more or less diffused over the whole of Christendom, nevertheless, some of its brightest rays will be found concentrated in that land of its earliest adoption. The province of Brittany has ever held an exalted rank among the most eminent nations of the world, as the native country of some of the most brilliant examples of chivalrous conduct. And whatever instances of courage or courtly deportment may elsewhere be adduced, the country which gave existence to Oliver de Clisson and Bertrand du Guesclin need not hesitate to place itself among the foremost claimants of glory and renown.

Having stated that Brittany was the *cradle* of chivalry and romance, I must now remark that the expression was used advisedly, and with a reservation. For although that province was the country of the earliest adoption of those systems upon the continent, yet it must by no means be considered as their *birth-place*. Even the Bretons themselves lay no claim to that honour, but they, together with all the

other nations of Europe, refer the earliest notices of the subject to the island of Britain, and more especially, to the principality of Wales. It is in that corner of the world that the earliest specimens of romantic fiction are to be found, as well as the most ancient characters of chivalry. For Arthur, and Merlin, and the knights of the Round Table, though they have been long naturalized in Brittany, nevertheless are, with very few exceptions, in their origin undoubtedly Welsh. And there is one material difference between the character they sustain among the Welsh, their real countrymen, and that which they exhibit in other countries of Europe. On the continent, for instance, they never appear otherwise than as heroes of romance; whereas in Wales, although in subsequent ages they were made to support the exaggerated character of fiction, yet in the compositions of their contemporary bards, they are always represented as real and actually existing personages. That the Welsh possessed tales of fiction, and those of a very high tone of colouring too, even in the days of the real Arthur, I do not mean to deny; aware as I am of the numerous proofs of the fact still extant; I am even convinced, that much of the machinery of the romance of chivalry is of an era far more remote than even those early ages; but it is evident that, in consequence of the all-absorbing fame of Arthur and his knights, these minor traditions became in the course of time blended with those of the Round Table.

However this may be, it is fully evident, from incontrovertible proofs, that the earliest characters of chivalry and romance are altogether Welsh. When the origin of those institutions, and of the extraordinary moral phenomena which accompanied them, began to be made the subject of literary inquiry, and before the several evidences necessary to its elucidation had been properly developed, various theories were suggested and strenuously maintained by several writers of ability; and almost every nation of the world laid claim to the honour of having given existence to them. Greece, Italy, Scandinavia, Spain, Arabia, all had their advocates, and all with equal success. Those who advanced their claims in favour of Italy, although the

influence of that country had once extended itself as far as the limits of the Roman empire, yet could not make it appear that the literature of chivalry and that of the classics, had any one character, or one single feeling in common. Those again who advocated the title of Germany and Scandinavia were equally unfortunate with the others: for neither Thor nor Odin, nor the names or attributes of any of their kindred divinities, nor even the slightest tinge of the northern mythology, are to be found in these tales. And, notwithstanding, the Normans had for so many years acted so conspicuous a part on the same arena with the heroes of chivalry, not a single north-man, of any importance to the system, is found in the early romances; and scarcely any in the second class, with the exception of Ogier the Dane, and he only as a follower of Charlemagne. With regard to the Spaniards, they have never even advanced any pretensions to the possession of such literature, prior to its introduction from France; and their early heroes are all of foreign extraction. The Saracens are in no better predicament than the others; for neither Mahomet, nor any other Arabian, is represented as founding the order of knighthood, nor is there among the traditions of the Round Table any allusion to the ordinances of the Koran. The very circumstance alone of the superior respect paid to the fair sex under the institution of chivalry, will for ever exclude the Mahomedan nations from the honour of having originated that noble system. And surely it is but reasonable to suppose that if either of the above nations had exercised any material influence upon the institution of chivalry, or its concomitant system of romance, there must have been some remains of such interferences, in the national customs, traditions, and names of eminent persons, according to the effect produced; and how absurd must it be then to imagine that any people could have founded the institution itself, without leaving any memorial to record the circumstance.

But in proportion as this subject became more investigated, and the various facts connected with it brought into notice, it became more and more evident that the primary elements of the whole system, were to be referred for their origin to the nation of the Welsh. Arthur, the founder of the Round Table, was a Silurian chieftain, and all his knights, together

with Merlin, the enchanter, were, without exception, of the same ancient British race. In short, the whole machinery of romance is of that identical fabrication : the mythology, traditions, and tone of sentiment, are altogether of Cymraeg origin : even those interesting personages, the *fairies* themselves, are of the same Celtic stock ; and however the advocates of their Oriental extraction may endeavour to derive them from the Peries of Persia, it is evident that the earliest notices of these unearthly beings are to be found in the romances of Arthur and his knights. The celebrated *Morgan la Fai*,* whose very name implies her Cambrian origin, exercised her dominion not only in Britain, but also over the whole of the continent, long before any idea of eastern mythology had found its way there ; and so far had this powerful princess extended her authority, that her reign was acknowledged, not merely throughout the whole of the western world, but even in those countries whose geographical situation would naturally have rendered them subject to the influence of Oriental fiction, did such influence exist, rather than to that of the remote Celtic tribes of Britain. For we find that, in Italy and Greece, and in many parts of Asia itself, the spirit of the Welsh romances had extended itself, and prevailed to such a degree as to supersede that of the native traditions. And, to this day, we are informed that when that beautiful and well-known optical illusion appears on the coast of Calabria, in which the forms of the buildings, on the shore, are seen as a series of castles and palaces over the straits of Messina, the inhabitants run out of their houses to view the extraordinary phenomenon, with every demonstration of delight, exclaiming that the *Fata Morgana* has honoured them with a visit, and deigned to reveal to them some of the magnificence of her fairy abode.

Although at the period when the investigation of the origin of modern literature began to occupy general attention, a diversity of opinion existed ; yet, as the various historical evidences were gradually developed, the claims of the Welsh became more decidedly established ; and *Dunlop*, who, in his admirable "*History of Fiction*," has examined the pretensions of the various claimants, has come to the conclusion that the

* Sometimes written Morgain and Morguein.

romances of the Round Table, which originated in the early legends of Armorica and Wales, form the most ancient and numerous class of this style of composition of which any trace remains. And *Panizzi*, in his masterly essay on the romantic poetry of the Italians, prefixed to his *Ariosto*, profiting by the researches of the numerous writers who preceded him on this topic, and possessed of a highly cultivated and discriminating judgment, has formed that decision to which a thorough knowledge of the subject must inevitably lead, and which must, henceforth, be considered as incontrovertible. He says, "If the original destination of poetry were in every nation of the world to celebrate the glorious actions of heroes, one of the provinces of England,* possessing one of the most ancient languages extant, would seem to have surpassed all other countries in the application of the art. All the chivalrous fictions, since spread throughout Europe, appear to have had their birth in Wales."

Such then, after the most severe and laborious scrutiny, of at least a century, appears to be the state of this question. But the original causes of these facts offer another problem not so easily solved. What could have compelled all the several nations of the civilized world to have recourse to the harassed, reduced, and almost exterminated race of Wales for subjects of applause and imitation? Were there among none of these any national recollections of their own, which could attract their notice? Was there among the warlike and widely extended tribes of Germany nothing worthy of attention? Nothing among the more polished inhabitants of Gaul; or even among the descendants of the Romans themselves? Was it that the coruscations of the Bardic *Awen* shone so bright that every other light faded into obscurity before them, and that the Bardic harp was so sweetly strung that whensoever its chords were struck, all others, even those of the classic lyre itself, must remain for ever mute; or, was there some mysterious destiny allotted to the first colonizers of the western world, that, although they should lose their dominion over the soil, they should still retain it over the minds of its occupiers? Truly there is something

* Britain.

in this subject more difficult of explanation than may appear upon a superficial view, and which may challenge the application of much more time and penetration in the inquiry, than I can ever hope to command.

When I was in Brittany, I felt exceedingly anxious to discover some remains of the ancient Breton *lays*, or of the original romances of the Round Table in the Breton language. But I was totally disappointed in my endeavours. What can have befallen all the ancient manuscripts which once existed, I am not able to conjecture; possibly the exercise of more attention and leisure than I was able to bestow upon the research, may hereafter succeed in bringing some of these treasures to light, if not in Brittany itself, at least in some of the libraries of other parts of the continent.

But although I was not successful with regard to the more ancient literature of the country, yet I was fortunate enough to meet with several compositions of the latter eras, both in manuscript and print, by no means devoid of interest. And that which I shall now notice as connected with the present subject, is a dramatic work, in the form of a tragedy, printed by Ledan, of Morlaix, in 1818; and which, to the best of my recollection, he told me was the first and only impression that had appeared, having been edited by himself from manuscript copies. It is entitled, *Buez ar petar mab Emon*, "The Life of the four sons of Aymon;" and, for a single tragedy, is a work of extraordinary dimensions, being an octavo of 416 pages, containing four times the quantity of one of Shakespeare's plays, and consisting of seven Acts, six of which are in verse, and the seventh in prose, which last is not in the form of a dialogue, but an historical narrative; and, as is befitting a work of such magnitude, the dramatis personæ are numerous and important in proportion; consisting of at least fifty characters, besides esquires, soldiers, monks, and attendants. The actors are no less important personages than Charlemagne and his Paladins, Roland, Oliver, Ogier the Dane, Solomon of Brittany, Aymon, duke of Dordogne, with his four sons, Reynault of Montauban, Richard, Alard and Guichard, &c.; also Beuvet of Egremont; Yon, king of Gascony; Maugis, the enchanter, and a multitude of others of nearly equal distinction.

It has been already observed, that the earliest European works of literature subsequent to the extinction of classic learning, were the romances of Arthur and his knights, forming a species of themselves, totally distinct from any thing which had been previously known. These having occupied the attention of the world for several ages, were at length succeeded by the romances of Charlemagne, which having grown out of the others, and though by no means equal to them in point of interest, did nevertheless, according to the progress of fashion, in many respects, supersede them. In this second class of romances, it must be admitted, the majority of the characters are not of the Breton race; however, the suspicion which has been often entertained, seems by no means unfounded, that even the fame of Charlemagne owed its existence to a connection with Brittany. For although I shall not much rely upon the assertion of the Breton extraction of his grandfather, Charles Martel, I still think it more than probable, that however great the real achievements of Charlemagne may have been as a character of history, yet that he owes his *romantic* celebrity altogether to the circumstance of his fellow-warrior, Roland, being warden of the borders of Brittany; and, if this Paladin was not actually a native of that province, as some suppose, he was at least a particular favourite with the Bretons, and was the means of transferring to his patron some of the effects of the partiality which he himself enjoyed, and of raising him to a certain degree of poetic renown, in consequence of the influence which the people of Brittany had long exercised over the imagination of the continental nations, and which afterwards so eminently displayed its power in the songs of Roncesvalles, and other popular compositions of the middle ages.

The romance of the *Quatre fils Aymon*, which was once so general throughout France, is said to have been originally composed by Huon de Villeneuve, together with several other pieces upon the same subject, as far back as the thirteenth century. But, however this author may claim the merit of the French compositions, it is not probable that the materials were entirely of his own creation. How far he is indebted to the Bretons for their supply, I cannot pretend to say; or

whether any of the above-mentioned French works be in the Breton tragedy, I have no opportunity of ascertaining. But whatever country produced the original, I must own that this identical copy under consideration cannot urge any pretensions to antiquity, as far as its present style of wording is concerned; there being a variety of internal evidence to limit its composition, or at least its revision, at farthest, to the latter end of the fifteenth century.

This subject appears, in later ages, to have become popular in several other countries as well as in France; as may be seen in the Spanish ballad, *Don Reynaldos de Montalcan*, and also in another, *Conde Claros de Montalcan*, which Count Claros was son to Reynauld. But to return to the tragedy.

The scene opens with Charlemagne seated on his throne, attended by his son Lohier, the twelve peers of France, and the rest of his suite. Charlemagne commences the drama in a speech, of which the following lines will afford a specimen of the metre used throughout the whole composition, and likewise of the corrupt state of the Breton language, in consequence of the perpetual mixture of French words. Charlemagne speaks,—

“ Me a meus an enor da vea roue Franç,
Hac Ampereur Romen, dre ar guir Brovidanç;
Me so mab da Bepin, ar monarq immortal,
A verit un enor a vezo eternal.”

“ I possess the honour of being king of France,
And Roman emperor by the true Providence;
I am son of Pepin, the monarch immortal,
Who deserves an honour that shall be eternal.”

When he has gone on in this strain for a page or two, the Duke of Nismes addresses him in a very courtier-like speech, upon the greatness of his fame, and the extent of his power. This is seconded by the Prince Lohier, who acknowledges the extensive nature of his father's power, but at the same time throws in an alloy by alluding to the conduct of Beuvet, duke of Egremont, who refuses to pay the homage which had been universally acknowledged by all others: this fact is confirmed by Ganelon, who says, “ That it is very true that the duke has refused to pay either homage or tribute, but that he does by no means mention this from any motives of jealousy.” Upon this, the king flies into a rage, and swears

by St. Denis of France, that he will punish this Duke of Egremont for his arrogance; but first of all, it is determined in council, that a deputation shall be despatched to him, consisting of Prince Lohier, the Counts of Morillon and Gidelon, together with four esquires, to demand his homage.

The second dialogue (*eilet dialog*) opens with the speech of the Duke of Egremont, who addresses his suite in the same manner that Charlemagne did :

“ Me so Duc puissant ebars en Egremont, &c.”

“ I am the puissant duke over Egremont, &c.”

and proceeds to state how, through the assistance which he, his brothers, and family, had rendered Charlemagne, that monarch had been elevated to the rank which he enjoyed :

“ On eus er zicouret en e oll vrezellou,
Exposet en danjer hor chorf hac hor madou.”

“ We have succoured him in all his battles,
Exposed to danger our body and our goods.”

but that his services had been repaid with ingratitude and insult, and he therefore determines upon refusing him tribute. His courtiers, of course, approve highly of his determination, and encourage him to persevere in it.

The next dialogue commences with the arrival of the ambassadors, Lohier, and his attendants : Lohier cites the duke to appear before his father and pay tribute, on pain of having every soul in the country put to the sword. The duke, as may be expected, refuses to obey, upon which a very stormy altercation takes place ; and in consequence of the irritating language of Lohier, the duke orders him to be seized : but the prince strikes the soldier who approaches him with his sword, and kills him : the duke and Lohier then engage in single combat, and Lohier is slain with a stroke of the sword. *Treuzi ra Lohier gant un tol cleze.*

The body of Lohier is brought home ; and, after considerable agitation and argument, his father prepares to avenge his death. Upon receiving intelligence of this, the Duke of Nanteuil, Beuvet's brother, together with his barons and his army, march to Egremont to succour Beuvet ; and likewise Gerard, duke of Rousillon, to endeavour to mediate : and Aymon, duke of Dordogne, another brother of Beuvet, goes

with his four sons to Paris to join the king. In the following scene, at the meeting of Beuvet and his adherents, the duke, after stating his intentions, intimates, that if matters should go hard with him, he will apply to his friend, the great Sultan of Constantinople, to bring an army of pagans to his assistance, and in this very Christian mood retires to make preparations.

In the meantime, Charlemagne is actively engaged in preparing his expedition against Egremont : and having assembled his army, when on the point of marching, he gives to Ogier the Dane, commission to head the vanguard, and display the *Oriflamme* :

“ Dechu, Ojer-Danoa, pa ne doch quet couard,
E roan-me ar soign demeus va avan-gard
Hac eus an a Oriflam, ar guir anseign a Franç,
Dre meus bepret ennoch calz euz a gonfianç, &c.”

Ogier, in a high-toned speech, acknowledges the honour, and declares his determination to maintain his post, even at the expense of being hacked to pieces alive.

“ Pa roit din-me'r soign. O roue Charlamagn ?
Demeus och avan-gard ha demeus och ansagn, &c.”

The army then sets out for Egremont ; and, in the next scene, they appear again on the stage, march once round, and halt before the town of Egremont, whence a messenger is sent to the duke, while the troops are refreshing themselves and adjusting their arms.

In the second act, the two armies approach each other ; that of Beuvet appears, and passes across the stage in quest of the king's, and again the king's army enters in search of Beuvet. At length the duke and his troops make their appearance a second time, and the two armies range themselves on the stage in front of each other. Then Ogier the Dane, at the head of the royal vanguard, calls out to the opposite army in no very gentle terms, and bids them stand, and he is answered in similar language by Gerard of Rousillon ; upon this the king and the duke commence a dialogue, and enter into a series of taunts and recriminations ; the king charges him with the massacre of his son Lohier, and the duke, in his turn, complains of ill usage from the king, and says,—

“ Guir ê sur, Charlamagn, chouï zo en Franç roue,
 Hogen ni a zoug choas, ha va breudeur ha me,
 Partout dre hor chorfou merqou an tolliou lanç
 Recevet vit souten ho curunen a Franç ;
 Hac evit recompanç da venteni ho stad,
 E fel dech or laqat pave dindan ho troad !
 Mes, mar och eus desir dont da denna venjanç
 Eus a varo ho mab, n'och eus nemet comanç ;
 Me a zo preparet, hac o tefi ive
 Da dostât diouzin demeus hed va chleze.”

“ It is surely true, Charlemagne, you are in France the king,
 But we hear also, my brothers and myself,
 Throughout our bodies, marks of the wounds of the lance,
 Received to sustain your crown of France ;
 And to recompense the maintaining of your state,
 You place us as the pavement under your feet !
 But if you now desire to take vengeance
 For the death of your son, you have but to commence ;
 I am prepared, and I also defy you
 To approach me within the length of my sword.”

This defiance is answered by Ogier the Dane, in his usual style. Then Gerard draws his sword (*Jerard a denn e gleze*) and replies to Ogier ; whereupon Solomon of Brittany, one of the king's adherents, calls upon the troops to draw their swords, and most devoutly commences the fight.

The two armies then engage, and after several pages spent in fighting, altercation, and tumult, night comes on, and the troops withdraw until the next morning, leaving a vast number of killed on the field. But on the morrow, instead of renewing the battle, a negotiation is entered into, and Beuvet is pardoned, upon condition of his doing homage, and appearing at Midsummer (*Voel yan*) in Paris with 200 men ; but, on his way to fulfil his engagement, he is met by a party of the king's adherents, where a skirmish takes place, and the duke is slain, together with several of his followers.

The next scene presents an encounter between a giant and Maugis, the enchanter, son of Beuvet. The giant enters alone, and commences a soliloquy in a very surly mood ; in which he expatiates upon his superior strength in the most arrogant manner. Having proceeded with this ebullition of self-sufficiency for a considerable time, he at length espies Maugis making his entrance, and immediately, in the most insolent manner, demands the reason of such intrusion. But Maugis, who does not seem to have any particular awe of

giants, answers him carelessly, and calls him *Camarad*. This familiarity excites the giant's choler still more, and he uses yet more abusive language; and upon this Maugis turns to, and answers him in his own style, with suitable fluency, and they commence a most energetic display of mutual abuse, which continues for two or three pages, until the giant, unable to control his temper any longer, draws his sword, and aims a furious blow at Maugis, which the enchanter parries most adroitly, and instantly closes with the giant, and throws him on the ground. Finding himself in this predicament, the monster roars out for quarter; but Maugis asks him what ransom he will give; upon which the giant answers that he will give his horse *Boyard*, the best in the universe, which is—

“Strong as the ocean, and fleet as the gale.”

“Creñ è evel ar mor, buan vel an avel;”

he will also give his sword *Flamberjé*, the most eminent in existence, which was

“Forged in hell, and tempered in the blood of asps;”

and adds,

“Flamberj eus da goste, ha Boyard dindannout,
Ep aon rac den ebet ech elles mont partout:”

“With Flamberj at thy side, and Boyard under thee,
Without fear of man thou mayst go where e'er thou wilt.”

The necromancer then accepts the ransom, and calls on the names of his familiar spirits,

“Tariel, Gaviel, Tarquam, Guabariel,
Crarari, Atarib, Core, Gargatiel, &c.”

The giant then discovers who he is, and informs him how the horse and sword had been obtained from the demon *Rouard*. The two combatants then part good friends; Maugis mounts on the back of *Boyard*, takes leave of the giant, and says,

“Flamberj eus e goste, ebars e zorn eul lanç,
Hac eve dirac-àn an daouzec Tad a Franç,
Ha daou-chant den armet prest clos da gombati,
E retent aroc-an evel gad dirac qi.”

“With Flamberj at my side, and in my hand my lance,
Should there come to meet me the twelve Peers of France,

And two hundred armed men ready to combat,
They would run away before me like a hare before a dog."

Having said this, he sallies forth upon Boyard, *like the wind*, to seek his cousins ; (*hao e ya evel an avel da gaout e genderti.*)

The piece now becomes more confused and complicated ; Aymon and his sons are among the principal actors, and an occurrence takes place which gives a new turn to the proceedings. Bertelot, the king's nephew, meeting Renauld, challenges him to play at chess, which challenge he accepts ; and, while engaged at the game, Bertelot, being dissatisfied at Renauld's conduct, and presuming upon his connection with the king, makes use of very offensive language, whereupon Renauld not only returns him the abuse, but lifts up the chess-board, and with it splits his head. After this exemplary act, which of course occasions some slight sensation at court, Renauld and his three brothers, together with their cousin Maugis, think it expedient to have recourse to flight ; and having taken refuge in the forest of Ardennes, they build a castle upon a rock on the banks of the Meuse, to which they give the name of Rochefort.

Charlemagne and his troops then set out to besiege this castle ; and, after various skirmishes, a project is formed by Hernier, and Griffon de Hauteville, to take it by stratagem ; accordingly, the royal troops gain admittance in the night, and a general assault is made. However, the vigilance of Maugis discovers the evil in time, and, rushing from his couch, towards his kinsmen, he gives the alarm, and rouses them in the following energetic address ;—

"Va chendervi Renod, Richard, Alard, Guichard,
Possubl ve e varvach evel pevar couard ?
Qemerit och armou, deut buan ganeme,
Setu leun ar chastel eus a dud ar roue."

"My cousins Renaud, Richard, Alard, Guichard,
Is it possible that you will die like four cowards ?
Take your arms, come quickly along with me,
Here the castle is full of the king's troops :"

and again,

"Setu tud ar roue deja mestr en donjon."

"Here the king's people are already masters of the keep."

In consequence of this seasonable alarm, the king's troops

are repulsed, and compelled to quit the castle; but the two spies, Griffon and Hernier, are taken; and, as a reward for their treachery, the one is hanged and the other quartered, both which operations are duly performed upon the stage, as are all the other actions of the piece.

The castle holds out a considerable time longer, but it is at length set on fire, and its inmates turned adrift to seek their fortunes once more; and, after a number of adventures, they come to the court of Yon, king of Gascony, who is at war with the king of Burgundy, a Saracen and a pagan. A battle soon takes place, in which Renauld encounters the king of Burgundy, and subdues him in single combat, but spares his life on condition of his renouncing paganism, for which service the king of Gascony gives Renauld the castle of Montauban, from which he afterwards derives his title, which castle is in the ancient province of Guienne, about twenty miles from Toulouse, and must not be confounded with another Montauban in Brittany, which is also celebrated in history.

The scene next following discovers Clera, sister to king Yon, attended by her page, whom the princess addresses as follows;—

“Clevit, va Faj bian, pa omp ama hon daou,
Em eus desir da chout diganech eur chelaou;
Hac eun dra a neve var sujet ar brezel,
Piou en deus delivret ar ger eus a Vourdel?”

“Listen, my little page, as we are here both together,
I have a wish to hear of thee the news;
And one thing new on the subject of the battle,
Who was it that rescued the town of Bordeaux?”

The page answers,

“Ato, princes yaouanq, &c.”

“Truly, young princess, a certain knight who came into this country with the Frankish people;” and proceeds to eulogize Renauld, and expatiate upon his exploits, and then “O my mistress, a braver knight does not exist than this Renauld, what a valiant man! How I should delight in seeing him married to you!” It should seem, that the princess had been accustomed to this kind of familiar communication with her little page, for she immediately ac-

knowledges that, from what she has heard, she is greatly charmed with the fame of this knight, and commissions the page to bring about an opportunity for an interview with him; and it so happens, that, with the good offices of this page, together with the good fortune of Renauld, not only an interview, but an attachment takes place; and, after a short scene of stage courtship, a match is concluded under the sanction of the king and public authorities.

The king then gives them possession of the castle of Montauban, which, he says, is one of the bravest places that can be found in this world.

“Hac evit argoulou gemerit Montoban,
Unan a vreve plaç a gafet er bed-man.”

His comforts there are but of short duration, for his old persecutor Charlemagne finds him out, and determines upon laying siege to his castle;

“De laqat ar siej var castel Montoban.”

And Roland, who is on this occasion appointed to lead the vanguard, approaches the fortress, and says,

“Quent evit ma quitain castel caer Montoban,
Ma na rân en laqat en ludu hac en tan.”

“Before I quit the fair castle of Montauban,
I will cause it to be reduced to ashes and to fire.”

However, the worthy Paladin does not find that so easy a business, for the castle holds out in defiance of him for a considerable time, until at length, through the treachery of Yon, it is forced to surrender.

It would not be an easy matter to give a description of the piece during the ensuing act, which consists of fighting, killing, and plotting, as usual, in which Roland and Oliver, and the other Paladins, act conspicuous parts, until at length Maugis, the magician, is brought into the power of Charlemagne, and instead of endeavouring to conciliate his enemies by respectful behaviour, he is upon this occasion more impertinent than ever; till at length he provokes the king to order chains and fetters to be brought and placed upon him, and to have him bound to a pillar for the night, promising that, before he breakfasts on the morrow, he will have him hanged; but Maugis, though bound in chains, tells him,

"Me bromet dech, Charles, dirac ar brincet m'ân,
E tijunin varchoas en castel Montoban."

"I promise you, Charles, before these princes here,
That I will breakfast to-morrow in the castle of Montauban."

This piece of insolence is too much, and they proceed to execute their threat on the spot, without waiting for the morning: upon this Maugis has recourse to his necromancy, and utters the following mystic words,

"Manrellon, Goberlon et chiminalom ;"

and immediately the king and his attendants fall into a profound sleep; Maugis then continues his incantations, and his chains are burst, and he is set at liberty: he then takes the king's crown, the sceptre, and the swords of the twelve peers; and, after a suitable soliloquy, walks away with them.

In one of the succeeding scenes, we have a single combat between Roland and Renaud, before the court, according to the usages of knighthood: they first prove their lances on horseback, and then they alight (*disquen a reont*) and combat on foot with their swords; and lastly, they close and try their strength in wrestling, occasionally addressing each other in courteous language, as becomes gentle and well-bred knights.

The prose narrative at the end goes on to relate, how Renaud went to the Holy Land, and how he and Maugis rescued Jerusalem by their courage: how he returned to Paris, and found his two sons grown up and knighted; and how he was at last treacherously slain while asleep, in the neighbourhood of Cologne, where he had retired, seemingly, as a voluntary act of penance.

Such is the outline of this Breton drama. Whether it was ever acted, or intended for acting, I have never inquired; but, as far as its general construction is concerned, I cannot see that, in addition to a sufficiently ample theatre, and the requisite number of performers, there is anything required but time and patience towards carrying its representation into effect, with as much consistency as that of dramatic compositions in general: and when we recollect that to this day, in many parts of the continent, theatrical exhibitions

are conducted in the open air, and the same drama carried on for several days together, we may conclude that it is not impossible that this piece may have undergone a similar representation. With regard to its language and composition, although there is a good deal of tedious harangue, yet, altogether, it is by no means devoid of interest, and in many passages possesses a considerable degree of merit.

The principal characters have long enjoyed a poetic celebrity in the world, although their real history is often very obscure, as well as the race of people to which they belonged, and the origin of their names and titles. The name of Emon is frequently met with in the middle ages, and is variously written, as Aymon, Almundus, Hamon, &c. and may be seen in that of *Fitz-Hamon*, one of the followers of the Conqueror who settled in South Wales; but of what language it was originally formed, is uncertain. The name of Renauld is equally obscure in its origin, and takes various forms according to the languages in which it appears; in France it is Renaud, anciently Regnault and Reginald; in Italy it is Rinaldo, and in Spain Reynaldos. It seems to have been introduced into Wales at the Norman conquest, and is still often met with, and pronounced Rhynallt. Roland has likewise been subject to similar transformations; in Italy he is Orlando, and in Spain Don Roldan, &c. but it has been conjectured, with some appearance of correctness, that he was in reality of Breton origin. Ogier, Ojer, or Hulgerus, is likewise supposed to have been a real character, but that his cognomen of *Danoys* has any reference to Denmark as his native country, is more than doubtful. The most probable conjecture is, that it was originally *Danné*, from his having been condemned to banishment by Charlemagne. Maugis, Mojis, Mogis, Malgis, or Malagigi, may have been of any race upon earth as far as his name is concerned, but the supernatural qualities of his horse seem to refer to a Celtic organ. In the Welsh triads, we have a notice of some sort of mischievous occurrence which seems to have taken place in Britain in the early mythological ages, and which is called the oppression of *March Malaen*, literally the *horse of Malaen*: whether this has any thing

to do with the demon horse of *Malgis*, I cannot pretend to say; I have known more improbable conjectures adopted upon less obscure subjects.

However the province of Brittany may have led the way in the revival, or rather the new formation of European literature, by exciting a spirit of composition, and supplying the materials of thought, in that interesting department which constitutes one of the principal characteristics of the modern school; and, however the same country may, in later times, have contributed towards the advancement of learning, by giving existence to men of distinction, in various branches of science, yet, from the secluded situation of the Bas Bretons, and the limited patronage which their ancient language has for some centuries experienced, it must not be expected, that, at the present day, their vernacular literature can be in a very flourishing state. Nevertheless, when it is recollected that the Bas Breton is the language of the peasantry, and lower orders only, we shall perhaps find that, with regard to its literary character, it is upon an equality with most of the provincial dialects of Europe. At least, we may venture to affirm that, with the exception of the Welsh, it possesses a greater command of the press than any other Celtic dialect, either as a patois, or a distinct speech. Indeed, whenever they have opportunities, the Bas Bretons, like their relatives, the Welsh, appear to be great patrons of the press; though it is to be lamented, that in Brittany, there are many causes in existence which tend greatly to obstruct the beneficial operations of that noble engine.

As an instance of the favourable disposition evinced by the Bas Bretons towards the cultivation of their native tongue, I need only notice the success which has attended the typographical labours of M. LEDAN, the spirited and patriotic printer of Morlaix; who, having for many years devoted his time to the editing of Breton books, has always found the demand to keep pace with his exertions. If I might judge from the appearance of his shop and warehouse, he has not to regret the want of pecuniary remuneration, for I found those depositories almost entirely filled with publications in the Breton language, whilst the rolling of his

printing press was continually heard over-head, employed upon similar works, as appeared by the proof sheets brought to him for examination, during the time I was standing by.

On seeing such a quantity of printing in the Bas Breton, I naturally felt a wish to ascertain the description of his readers; and, before he had time to answer the inquiries I was making, my curiosity was gratified by seeing several young persons, in peasants' habits, enter the shop, speaking Bas Breton, who asked for some small tracts in that language, and, after selecting such as they wanted, paid a few halfpence for them, and departed. M. Ledan took the opportunity of telling me, that this was the class of people which formed the bulk of his customers, and that, if I remained there some time, I should see others constantly coming in upon the same business. He also assured me that the Breton peasants are much more disposed to cultivate a taste for reading, than the same class of persons among the French; and I must add, in confirmation of this statement, that I am not aware of the existence in any other part of France, of a printing establishment entirely supported by the peasantry, and lower orders.

It may possibly here be asked, of what description those publications are which occupy so much of the printer's attention, and so crowd his warehouse; as it may reasonably be supposed that there must be among them many things of importance in a literary point of view. To this I can only answer, that the existence of the foregoing facts will afford us gratification, merely as evidences of the taste of the people for reading their native tongue; for, it must be acknowledged, that the contents of the publications are, for the most part, of a very inferior order. And, although the perusal of such works, must, in strictness of speech, be denominated *reading*, yet, as far as the cultivation of the mind is concerned, it is little else than the sheer act of deciphering so much letter-press, without the acquisition of a single new idea that can at all conduce towards improvement. It, however, familiarizes the eye with the appearance of a book, and so far, of course, is not without its utility. I would by no means wish to detract from the merits of M. Ledan; he has perhaps done as much as is compatible with his own principles, and

the restrictions under which he labours; but I would solely wish to furnish those of my countrymen, who feel an interest in the subject, with such information as I may chance to possess, relative to Bas Breton publications, of which this establishment at Morlaix supplies, by far, the greatest portion; and, having purchased a copy of every publication there for sale, I feel myself competent to speak, with some degree of certainty, of their contents. It is therefore not without considerable regret, that I am forced to acknowledge, that, although there is a shop and a warehouse nearly full of these publications, and a printing press unceasingly employed in their production, yet, when an assortment is made, consisting of a single copy of each work, the whole collection will occupy but a *very* small space in a library. It is much to be lamented, that a people who evince such a strong predilection for books, should remain so long unsupplied with some more profitable matter than that which they are now permitted to possess. I took the liberty of suggesting to the printer the expediency of establishing some Breton periodical, similar to our *Seren Gomer*, &c. but he did not appear to receive the hint in such a way as to give me any hopes of his acting upon it. Indeed, were he disposed to undertake such a work, there are insurmountable difficulties in the way of his conducting it upon an enlarged and liberal plan; for as this gentleman, in addition to his being himself a staunch Catholic, is also printer to the bishop of Quimper, and all his publications have to pass the censorship of that prelate, and to receive his imprimatur, permitting their being printed and circulated through the whole diocese (*dre an oll Escopti*) before they can be put into the press; and, as the Breton clergy would look with no small jealousy upon whatever should, in the remotest degree, interfere with their particular views, it is morally certain that any periodical work upon general topics, however cautiously edited, could not fail of coming, sooner or later, in collision with their prejudices.

Such, at least, was the state of things among the Bas Bretons a few months ago.* What effects the late revolutionary proceedings may have produced, or may be likely to

* In 1829.—EDITOR.

produce, I have no means of ascertaining; but it is probable that their moral influence will be far greater, and more permanent, than those of the first revolution, in proportion as the people have been prepared for their reception.

The former revolution had to enter into immediate conflict with all the ancient prejudices of the nation, both political and religious. It had to encounter the prepossessions of a people, whose isolated situation, and dislike of innovation, had established among them a sentiment of the most devoted attachment to the reigning family and existing order of things; and whose local and detached dialect had operated as an effectual barrier against the introduction of those sceptical principles so generally diffused over other parts of the kingdom.* Whereas the last convulsion found a people, who, for almost a whole generation, had been accustomed to similar changes, and to a considerable portion of whom they were by no means unwelcome: for, notwithstanding that the Bas Bretons have generally retained a strong attachment to the Roman Catholic religion, and, as far as might be collected from outward appearance, a stranger would hardly suspect that the present inhabitants had in the least deviated from the example of their forefathers; yet, at the same time, it is scarcely possible that they could have passed through thirty years of revolutionary agitation without, in some degree, partaking of its influence, even in their religious observances. However this may be, it is quite certain, that in political matters, there is no equivocal demonstration of feeling. Therein, the first revolution has effectually done its work, in Brittany as well as in the rest of France. It was evident, even long before the late movements were in the least anticipated, that although the Bourbons had succeeded in repossessing themselves of the throne, they had never been able to regain their influence over the people. For in that instance, by some singular and extraordinary fortune, the empire of Napoleon had continued to survive his personal defeat, and the overthrow of

* It is but justice to that ancient language to remark, that although its limited application, as a medium of intercourse, may subject it to the charge of having perpetuated the superstitions of popery, it nevertheless possesses the merit of having, by the exclusion of the works of Voltaire and his associates, preserved the country from the contamination of infidelity.

his dynasty. During the short time I passed in Brittany, this alienation of homage was continually thrusting itself upon my observation, in the manner and style of expression of those with whom I chanced to converse, and was afterwards more decidedly evinced in the conduct of the people; for, when the Bourbons, on their expulsion from Paris, despatched emissaries into Brittany and La Vendée, to endeavour to rouse those provinces to take arms in support of their cause, they were utterly unable to make any impression in their favour. And when the heads of the old Vendean families sent to those of the Chouans of Brittany, to know their sentiments upon the subject, the result of the consultation was a unanimous determination to make no further exertions in support of the Bourbons.

One of the effects of the last revolution has been the establishing of a complete religious toleration; so that the church of Rome is no longer in possession of that paramount authority which it previously enjoyed. The way is now *legally* open to the introduction of Protestant principles. What success any attempts at conversion would meet with among the Bas Bretons remains to be seen: the priests would, of course, endeavour to retain their influence, and offer resistance to whatever might militate against their creed. It is a curious fact, that the New Testament has, within these four years, been, for the first time, translated into the Breton, and also printed in that language; and the translation of the Old Testament is also in a state of forwardness.* When these weapons shall be brought into the field against the legends of Popery, the result of the contest will be a matter of no ordinary interest.

But, to return to the Breton press at Morlaix. Of the works which I purchased at that establishment, the following selection may serve as a specimen.

The first that presents itself, and the most important, in point of size and literary value, is the old dramatic romance of the Four Sons of Emon, already noticed.

The next that comes to my hand is a duodecimo, entitled *AN DEVEZ MAD, THE GOOD DAY*, containing short prayers

* For further particulars concerning these translations, the Reader is referred to Vol. II. of the present work.—EDITOR.

and reflections for every portion of the day, adapted to the station of every member of a family, some of which are marked by great simplicity of character, though perhaps not always happy in their explanation of scriptural texts. As instances, the females when they sweep the house (*pa scubit an ti*) are instructed to recollect the self-abasing expression of St. Paul, "we are the sweepings of the earth," "for that we are but earth and ashes, like this dust which I sweep;" "*Ne'n on nemet douar ha ludu evel ar poultr-man a scuban*:" and to seek the purifying of the soul, as well as the cleansing of the house. The men, when they cut wood (*pa drochit coat*) are taught to reflect upon the expression, "now is the axe at the root of the tree;" "*E m'ân a rochel e grien ar vezen*."* "Death will lift up his scythe to cut off my life, as I cut down this tree;" "*Ar maro a sao he falch da drechi va bue, evel ma trochan ar vezen man*."

This volume also contains Breton verses, descriptive of the various ceremonies of the mass (*on Oferen*.) together with some Latin extracts from the mass-book. Among the Breton verses, there is one upon the renouncing of the seven mortal sins, which appears to possess some merit, as far as its easy flow of language is considered. The first stanza will serve as a specimen of the whole.

Renonç a ran
Dide, Orgouill, pechet Lucifer
Renonç a ran,
Dide adieu a lavaran :
Te cheus collet hon Tadou genta
Va choll a rafes ive brema.
Renonç a ran.†

* This is not from Le Gonidec's translation; the sentence is by him rendered much more literally, *Râg ar vouchal a zô a-vréma lékiad out grizien ar guez*. The edition of the Breton Testament, printed at Brest in 1847, reads, "Hag ar vouc'hal a oz dija lekeed out grizien ar guez," Matt. iii. 10; and, "Hag ema ar vouc'hal lekeed dija ouc'h grizien ar guez," Luke iii. 9.—EDITOR.

† *Gran* is an inflexion of the verb, *Ober*, to do. This is one of the many instances of the general imperfect state of all existing languages, and of the manner in which the inflexions of one word are borrowed to eke out the deficiencies of another. *Ober* is doubtless of the same origin with the Latin *opero*, and appears under another form in the Welsh *peri*, to cause, and the Hebrew *bara*, to create; whereas, *gran* is evidently the Latin *creo*, as may be seen in its inflexion *great*, *made*; the resemblance of *ran*, to the Greek *δρα*, seems likewise something more than a mere coincidence. The corresponding Welsh word to the Breton *gra*, seems to be *gwna*.

Why *ober*, in default of regular inflexions, is indebted to its synonyme *gran*, let those answer who can explain the same irregularity in the English *go*, and

Renounce I do
Thee, Pride ; the sin of Lucifer,
Renounce I do :
To thee I say adieu ;
Thou didst cause the perdition of our first parents,
Thou wouldst also work my perdition now :
Renounce thee I do.

As this book contains the licences of two Breton bishops, for its printing and circulation, I shall copy those documents here as examples of the jealousy with which the Breton priests watch over the movements of the press.

APPROBATIONOU.

Ni Escop a Sant-Briec, goude beza laqet examina ar scrit dorn-en brezonec euz al levric-mâ hanvet "AN DEVEZ MAD," a bermet d'an Autrou LEDAN, Imprimer-Librer e Montroulez, e imprima hac e verza.

† MATHIAS,
Esc. St. Briec.

En Cær-Ahes an 30 a Ebrél, 1822.

Ni Yan-Lois Keramanach, Cure euz Montroulez, carguet gant an Outrou Pêr-Viçant Dombidau de Crousheilles Escop a Guemper, da examina al levr bian hanvet AN DEVEZ MAD, ha de approuvi, mar bize a propos ; goude beza en examinet mat, o veza n'hon euz cavet ennan petra control d'ar feiz Catholic, o veza er chontrol cavet penaoz e vezo util meurbet evit sanctification ar Vretonet hon euz permetet d'an Antrou LEDAN e imprima hac e zistribui dre ann oll escopti.

J. L. Keramanach,
Cure a Vontroulez.

E Montroulez,
an 20 a vis Even, 1822.

APPROBATIONS.

We, the Bishop of St. Brioux, after having caused to be examined the Breton manuscript of this little book, called "THE GOOD DAY," do permit M. LEDAN, printer and bookseller, of Morlaix, to print and sell it.

† MATHIAS,
Bishop of St. Brioux.
Carhaix ; 30th April, 1822.

We, John Louis Keramanach, Curé of Morlaix, charged by the Lord Pêr-Viçant Dombidau de Crousheilles, Bishop of Quimper, to examine the little book, called "THE GOOD DAY," and to approve of it, if it should be proper ; after having examined it well, we have found in it nothing contrary to the Catholic faith ; we have, on the contrary, found that it will be exceedingly useful to the sanctification of the Bretons, and we have permitted M. LEDAN to print and distribute it through the whole diocese.

J. L. Keramanach,
Curé of Morlaix.

Morlaix, 20th June, 1822.

This book, like all others sold ready bound, has, on one of the inside corners of the cover, a small square piece of paper pasted in, similar to the advertisements of stationers in general, and of which the following is a copy :

went, am and be ; the Welsh myned and aeth, wyj and byddaf ; the Latin sum, es, fui, &c. Are not these the distorted fragments of some great primeval language, shattered at Babel, and dispersed among the various nations of the earth?

AVIS.

Caout a rër e ty LEDAN
Imprimer-Librer e traon
Ru ar Vur e Montroulez,
a bep seurt Levriou latin
gallec ha brezonec ; plûn
liou, paper, &c. &c.

ADVERTISEMENT.

To be had at the house of LEDAN,
printer and bookseller, at the bot-
tom of Wall-street, Morlaix ; and
every sort of Latin, French, and
Breton books ; pens, ink, paper,
&c. &c.

There is likewise another small volume, called *Raglamant ar Vuez*, The Regulation of Life ; *evid an dut divar ar meaz*, for Country People. It is nearly a counterpart of the foregoing, and contains *Ar Pedennou* deus ar mintin hac eus an nos*, *Gousperou ar Zul*, &c. The prayers for morning and night, Sunday vespers, &c. It is probable that considerable portions of these, and other works of the same description, are only translations from the French.

Also, *Christian Instruction for young People*. 12mo. containing moral and religious duties, with examples and illustrations from various authors, both sacred and profane.

The Historical Catechism of the Abbé Fleury, 12mo. There is another translation of this work by Le Gonidec, more complete in its contents, as well as in style and orthography.

The Lamentations of Jeremiah, in Breton verse.

In addition to these, I have a Breton almanac, such as is

* The word *peden* and *beden*, a prayer, and also *pedi*, to pray, are evidently taken from the Latin, *peto*, to entreat, as is also the German, *beten*, to pray, as well as the English, *bead*, which originally signified a prayer, as may be seen in the expression, "to tell one's beads," i. e. to say one's prayers ; although the word has long been transferred from its proper signification, and applied to the little tallies strung together, and used by the Roman Catholics to assist in keeping a register of their prayers. In the Principality of Wales, there are several churches which bear the name of *Betres*, the etymology of which has not a little puzzled antiquaries, and has been variously given, as *Abbatis*, *Beatus*, *Bead-house*, &c. Now, the latter word, could the difficulty of its Saxon origin be removed, would afford a very plausible explanation of the term ; but it is not easy to conceive how an English word could have been so generally adopted in Wales, while it does not appear that it occurs at all in England itself. But if we consider the priority of the Latin word, and the exclusive use of that language in ecclesiastical matters, during the dominion of the church of Rome, the objection will, in a great measure, be obviated, though I must confess the last syllable remains as unintelligible as ever.

published annually; and also a collection of about sixty pamphlets mostly small, and seldom exceeding eight pages each, containing religious dialogues, generally in rhyme, together with songs of various descriptions, to the amount of seventy or eighty pieces.

These, like the same class of compositions in England, are printed on paper of the coarsest sort, though they differ from the long scroll-shaped English ballad, in being made to fold into duodecimo pages. They have generally the name of the tune to which they are to be sung, annexed to the title, such as *Var ton, An dour hag an tan; on the tune, Fire and Water; Var ton, Labourer Sul ha Gouel; Labouring Sunday and holiday; var ton nevez; on a new tune; Var ton Galleg; on a French tune, &c.* The Canticles, or religious songs, which, as may be expected from a press so entirely under ecclesiastical superintendence, form the most numerous class, have also the names of the tunes annexed; and those are, for the most part, of a more serious character. *Buez Job; the Life of Job*; for instance, is composed to the tune *Va Doue leun a drugarez; My God full of mercy.*

Some of these last appear to be composed by men of education, probably clergymen; and could they be divested of the superstitions and puerilities by which they are encumbered, they would not be altogether devoid of merit. They are, for the most part, evidently the compositions of uneducated persons, and exhibit the efforts of a rustic muse in her native untutored simplicity.

The Breton poets, like the sons of genius in all countries, are not without their aspirations after fame and immortality. And lest their poetic merits should not be duly assigned to them by their readers, they often contrive to make the last stanza a medium for conveying to the world a knowledge of their name, residence, occupation, &c. after the manner of their fellow-rhymers in Wales.

In modern Welsh ballads, and other rustic compositions of the Principality, it is very usual to find these important circumstances announced at the conclusion, in such words as the following;—

“Os gofyn neb yn unlle
Pwy ddododd hyn ar gân,” &c.

So in a poetical dispute, between a ragman and a papermaker, in the Breton language, now before me, the author informs "all that may be curious to know who composed this song, that it was *John ar Guen*, of Tréguier, a native of Plougrescant, who, ever since his youth, has lived in the parish of Plouguiel."*

"An ini a vo curius a deuyo da choulén
 Piou en eus grêt ar *chanson* var ar Bapererien ;
Yan ar Guen eus a Dreguer, natif a Blougrescant,
 E chom e paros Plouguiel abaoa ma voa yaouanq."

He also talks of lodging at *Melin Pont ar Vern, e ti Yan-Frances ar Moen* ; at the Mill of Pont yr Vern, in the house of John Francis Moen.

This Yan ar Guen seems to be not only possessed of that ambition so becoming his character as a poet, but also to be a man of no small industry in his pursuits, if I may form a judgment from the number of his compositions which I have chanced to meet with. However, he does not mean to rest satisfied with the empty possession of a name, even after the termination of his mortal career ; as he takes the opportunity of making the posthumous celebrity which he prepares for himself, the means of procuring advantages which are never dreamed of by his Welsh fraternity. Yan ar Guen, in his autobiographic summary, at the conclusion of his compositions, does occasionally, in the most adroit manner possible, introduce a hint that his readers, when they hear of his death, should say a prayer for the deliverance of his soul out of purgatory.

"Pa glevot e vo maro, lavarit ur beden
 En deliveranç da ene ar Chaner *Yan ar Guen*."

It is true, that in consequence of this post-obit demand the patrons of Breton bardism have an extra call upon their attention, yet they are in other respects possessed of

* The word *Plou*, which commences so many Breton local names, signifies a parish (Wallicè plwyf,) and is, by the Breton etymologists, derived from the Latin word *plebs*. It is remarkable that the word *Llan*, a church, which, in the same manner, commences the names of Breton parishes, as *Lanion*, &c. has become so completely obsolete in Brittany, that I never met with any one in that country acquainted with its signification ; but as the word is also seen perpetually occurring in Welsh names, as well as Breton, it is suspected by the Bretons that it must be of British origin.

privileges which some of our countrymen would regard with feelings of envy, as they are totally exempt from the system of the *cynghanedd*, or alliteration, so unremittingly pursued by the generality of our modern Welsh bards. The Breton poetry, like the language itself, being of the most plain and simple construction, I do not recollect a single instance of even accidental alliteration in the whole language; nor do I suppose that the Bretons have the slightest notion of its application to the purposes of poetry, either as necessary or ornamental. The only passage I can call to mind, as in the least partaking of this style, is the following:

“Mervel da greis an hanter nos,
Mervel bemde, mervel bemnos.”

I. e.—Wallicè *marw beunydd, marw beunos.*

It must be allowed, that in unskilful hands, when sense is sacrificed to sound, and when superfluous and unmeaning expressions are had recourse to, in order to fill up vacancies, this system of alliteration becomes intolerably tiresome and disgusting; but, when judiciously employed by men of genius, it is a most valuable auxiliary, and contributes exceedingly to the sweetness and harmony of versification: and, however deservedly its abuse may be censured, yet, doubtless, the Welsh language owes much of its copiousness, flexibility, and energy of expression, to the cultivation of the bardic *cynghanedd*.

From the errors of this system the Bretons are at present free, but they are, at the same time, unacquainted with its advantages. Nevertheless, their poets do sometimes succeed in giving considerable effect to their compositions, as, for instance, in the song of “*Come to the Charnel*,” which, though extremely simple in its language and ideas, yet is so admirably adapted to the subject, as well as to the taste and comprehension of the people, that upon those in whose native tongue it is written, it cannot fail of making a deep impression. The first stanza commences with a call to come to the charnel-house, and behold the relics of our brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, nearest relatives, and dearest friends, &c.

“Demp d’ar Garnel, Christenien guelomp ar religiou
Eus hor breudeur, choareset, hon tadou, hor mamou,
Demeus hon amezeyen, hor brassa mignonet,
Guelomp ar stad truezus e pini int rentet.”

This commencement does, somehow or other, remind me of the opening address of the ancient British elegy on Cynddylan, by Llywarch Hên; though in other respects it bears no comparison with that beautiful composition. There is a boldness of thought and expression in the works of our ancient bards, together with a wild independence of style, which gives them a character in the highest degree striking and decided, and which modern poets have hitherto, for the most part, wanted either the courage or the genius to imitate.

From the foregoing extracts it will be seen, that the Bretons, although unacquainted with the alliterations of the Welsh, or the blank verse of the English, yet do, in common with them, acknowledge the use of rhyme in the construction of poetry; and that not merely as an occasional ornament, as among the English, but as an indispensable qualification. They have also the knowledge of various metres, according to the subjects of their compositions, and the airs to which they are intended to be sung. Nor have I remarked any thing in the genius of their language, to prevent its being moulded into any known species of verse; but the measure which appears to have been adopted as the heroic, is the Alexandrine couplet, of which the following specimens, from the tragedy of “Pevar mab Emon,” will suffice:

“Rac-se eta, Roland, it hardivar al lis,
Ni a rêy hor possubl da ober dêch justic’.”

“Ha chouï a voar bremà ar pouez demeus va lanç ?
Ne vo qet pel Roland, o pezo recompanç.”

This is precisely the French heroic metre; and, although the accent of the Breton is more distinguishable to an English ear, yet, upon the whole, the cadence of the French and Breton poetry seems to have sprung from the same original source, though it would be difficult to determine in which language this metre was first used. Of course I may be biassed in my judgment by national prejudice, but I have never been able to persuade myself that this style of verse is

so well adapted to epic poetry as the shorter metre of the English. Whether the constant use of this lengthened measure, and the rigid adherence to rhyme, has tended to create that habit of prolonged declamation so general among the French dramatic writers, I will not take upon myself to decide; but there most certainly is in the French heroic measure, even in their most celebrated compositions, and when recited by their ablest tragedians, a monotonous and sing-song cadence, which imparts to it a character, partaking more of the ballad, or elegiac strain, than of the masculine dignity of an epic composition.

I will acknowledge that this kind of measure has often been successfully used in English, and that too in subjects of an heroic description. CAMPBELL has managed to give it a character of exceeding energy, in some of the commencing lines of one of his songs. The address to the Mariners of England :

“This spirits of your fathers shall start from every wave, &c.”

But then Campbell used it merely in a song, and would probably hesitate before he adopted it for a tragedy, or an epic poem.

Notwithstanding its defects, this lengthy kind of metre seems to have been very general, a few centuries ago, among most European nations. Although the Bretons do not possess documents of sufficient antiquity to enable us to determine the date of its first appearance in that country, yet, it has evidently been long naturalized among them. There is no proof of their having brought it over with them from Great Britain; the measure most congenial with the taste of the ancient British bards was one of a very different description, being generally shorter, and more irregular, and what may be properly distinguished by the term *Pindaric*.

But, however this may have been with regard to the early bardic writers, the measure in question was, in subsequent times, a favourite among the Welsh, as may be seen in the instance of those old and popular verses, called the *Prophecies of Merlin*, of which the following stanza will serve as an example :

“Ceir gwel'd ymladdfa greulon ar Gefencethin fryn,
Ceir gwel'd y gwaed yn llifo ar hyd cleddyfau'n llyn,
Fe fydd y cyrn yn canu o gylch i Abernant ;
Ar ben rhiw y cyrph ond odid fe leddir llawer cant.”

“There will be seen a fearful conflict on Cefen-cethin hill,
And blood in torrents streaming along the sword-blades down,
The war-horns will be sounding round about Abernant ;
On the height of the steep of corpses there will be many a hundred slain.”

This stanza, which I quote from memory, forms part of a long rhapsody of similar “skimble-skamble stuff,” relating to the fortunes of Britain; and though not the identical strange concealments concerning the Molewarp and the Ant, alluded to, by Shakespeare, as having been dwelt upon by Glyndwr, so much to the annoyance of his confederate, Hotspur, yet this curious composition has long been current in the Principality as the production of Merlin, and, like all others attributed to that extraordinary personage, it has obtained no small influence among the people; one instance of which I shall here notice, as having occasioned the present occurrence of this metrical specimen to my recollection, and likewise, affording an example of the manner in which accident may sometimes contribute towards the confirming of prejudices and superstitious notions.

A few years ago, when the colliers and miners of South Wales had struck for wages, and entered into a determination of redressing their own grievances, it was their custom to meet upon the mountains in bodies of several thousands, and having there formed themselves into parties of a hundred men each, to move about the hills in that order, for the purpose of visiting the several iron-works and stopping the furnaces, &c. Now, it so happened that one of their places of rendezvous was on the side of the mountains of Carno, to the south of *Crickhowel*, and not far from *Nant-y-glo*, another place named in the poem;

“Ceir gwel'd y gād a'r dyrfa yn d'od i Nantyglo ;”

“The battle and the tumult will be seen approaching Nantyglo, &c.”

And the above-quoted prediction of Merlin was applied to that occasion: the word *Penrhiw-cyrph* being, by a very easy mistake, changed into *Penrhiw-cyrn*; the summit of the steep

of the *carns* ; * and was thus continually repeated through the country with the greatest earnestness, as about to come to pass. It also happened while these misguided men were thus ominously hovering along the sides of Penrhiw-cyrn, that a strong body of military was actually marching up the other side of the adjacent valley, for the purpose of dispersing them ; and had they encountered them among the fastnesses of Carno, it is not improbable that the natural advantages of the ground would have tempted them to resistance, and occasioned the slaughter and bloodshed described in the prediction.

Where Penrhiw-cyrph may be, I cannot tell, or Cefnecethin either ; but there is an Abernant† among the iron-works of Glamorganshire, and had this mischance occurred, the difference between *carns* and corpses would not have been sufficient to deprive the sage enchanter of the honour of having foreseen the whole event.

Among the various recollections of Breton chivalry, few are cherished in that country with greater delight than those connected with the *Combat des Trente*, or, as it is sometimes called, the *Bataille des Trente*, in which thirty Breton knights and their attendants entered the lists, in mortal combat, against the same number of English. The particulars of this celebrated rencounter are as follows :

During the Breton war of the succession, between *John de Montfort* and *Charles de Blois*, in the reign of our Edward the Third, A.D. 1350, while De Beaumanoir, a Breton knight, commanded the forces of De Blois, at the castle of Josselin, and the Earl of Pembroke, who had been sent over from England, by King Edward, with a body of men, to the assistance of De Montfort, was stationed at Ploermel ; it appears that the English troops, under the sanction of Pembroke, but contrary to the conditions of a truce then established, were in the habit of committing many excesses in the neigh-

* *Cyrn* is, in a part of South Wales, used as the plural of *Carn*, as in this instance of *Mynydd y Cyrn*, *Waun y Cyrn*, &c. There are several *Carns* upon this mountain, which, from the stone coffins they contained, are evidently sepulchral, and their situation seems to indicate that they were also intended as beacons.

† Penrhiwcyrph, Cefnecethin, and Abernant, are places in Carmarthenshire : there is also a place called Abernant, near Llanwrtyd, in Breconshire.—EDITOR.

bouring country, ill-treating the unarmed peasantry, and exercising much cruelty and oppression towards such as fell into their power. Beaumanoir, indignant at these proceedings, went with an escort to Josselin, and remonstrated with Pembroke upon the unworthiness of such conduct; but that nobleman, instead of attending to his arguments, treated him with considerable haughtiness; whereupon, Beaumanoir, with all the good breeding which characterized the gallant and gentle knights of that day, proposes that the difference may be settled between themselves, and that a day be appointed on which they shall meet, with an equal number of followers, and decide the dispute by an appeal to arms. To this the haughty Pembroke immediately consents; and accordingly, upon an appointed day, a tournament of thirty against thirty, takes place on the field of *Mie-Voie*, half-way between Josselin and Ploermel, in which the Bretons are victorious. Froissart, in referring to this combat, says it was undertaken by these champions for the *love of their mistresses*; and that he had, afterwards, seen at the table of Charles the Fifth, king of France, a Breton knight, named Yewains Charruel, who had been in the Combat des Trente, and whose hacked and scarred visage satisfactorily shewed that the day had been well fought.

This celebrated rencounter has always been a favourite subject of traditional record among the Bretons; and there are several families still in existence in Brittany, which claim a descent from some of the principal persons engaged in it. I have had the honour of meeting one gentleman who was an acknowledged descendant of Beaumanoir himself, and who was by no means insensible to the merits of his illustrious ancestor.

In addition to the traditions of the Bretons, and the local testimonies of *Mie-Voie* and the adjacent territory, this occurrence has been frequently noticed by historians. But the fact has been lately corroborated by a discovery, in the Bibliothèque du Roi, of a contemporaneous manuscript, containing a poem, in old French, descriptive of the event.

This manuscript was discovered a few years ago by M. de Fremerville and M. de Penhouet, in their antiquarian researches relative to Brittany. It is written on vellum, in

4to. and contains upwards of five hundred lines ; and has been handsomely printed, at Paris, by Crapelet, with a facsimile of the original, and explanatory notes, together with the armorial bearings of the Breton champions. The following extracts will serve as specimens :

"Cy co'mence la bataille de XXX englois et de XXX bretons qui fu faite em bretagne, l'an de grace mil trois cens Cinquante le sammedi debant letare Iherusalem."

"Here commences the battle of the Thirty English and the Thirty Bretons, which took place in Brittany, in the year of grace 1350, on the Saturday before Lætare Jerusalem."

Seigneurs or fastet paix chlrs et barons
Banneris bachelers et trestoux nobles hons
Euesques et abbes gens de riligions
Heraulx menestreelx et tous bons compaignons
Gentilz homs et bourgeois de toutes nacions
Escoutez cest roumant que dire vous voulons
Listoire en est vraie et lez dix en sont bons
Coment xxx Engloiz hardix cōme lions
Combatirent vn jour contre xxx Bretons."

"Nobles give attention ; knights and barons, bannerets,† bachelors,‡ and all noble persons ; bishops and abbots, religious men, heralds, minstrels, and all good companions ; gentlemen and burghers of every nation ; listen to the romance which we will relate to you ; the history is true, and the expressions [ditties] good ; how thirty English, bold as lions, combated one day against thirty Bretons."

"Quant Dagorne fu mort de cest ciecle devie
Deuant auri le fort fu finée sa vie, &c."

"When Dagorne§ was dead, before the castle of Auray his life was terminated, &c."

During his lifetime, the citizens and cultivators of the soil were not harassed by the English : but after his death, all this was changed, for Pembroke began to ravage the country, and illtreat the inhabitants. When Beaumanoir heard of this, he went to Ploermel, to remonstrate upon the subject ;

* A festival of the church of Rome, 27th of March, 1351, according to the new style.

† *Bannerets*, knights who had a sufficient number of vassals to form a company, and entitle them to bear a banner in the field.

‡ *Bachelors*, students in arms or arts, gentlemen who had not received the order of knighthood.

§ Sir Thomas Daggeworth, the English commander, who held the castle of Auray for the Countess de Montfort. He was slain in a Battle with Raoul de Cahors, one of De Blois' captains.

and on his way he witnessed the cruelty which was exercised towards the peasantry, for multitudes of them were led captive, bound and fettered, like cattle. Beaumanoir being grieved and enraged at this sight, said to Pembroke ;

“Chlrs ’d Engleterre, vous faictes grant péchie
De trauailler les pources, ceulz qui sient le blé
Et la char et le vin de quoy avon plante, &c.”

“Knights of England, you do great wrong in afflicting the poor people, those who sow the corn, &c. they formerly were allowed to remain unmolested. How soon the arrangements of Daggeworth are forgotten !”

“Et Bomeboure s’y respont par moult tres grant fierté,
Beaumaner taisies vous ; de ce naist plus parle, &c.”

“And Pembroke answered him with great haughtiness, ‘Beaumanoir, be silent, speak no more of that, Montfort shall be duke of this noble duchy, from Pontorson to Nantes, and even to Saint Mahé. Edward shall be king of France, in spite of the French and their allies.’”

“Et Beaumaner respont par grant humilitez.
Songies un aultre songe, cestui est mal songé
Quer jamais par tel voie nen auriez demy pie.”

“And Beaumanoir answered with great humility, ‘Conceive another idea, this was ill imagined, for by such a road you can never proceed half a foot.’”

He then makes the proposal to Pembroke of deciding the dispute in mortal combat, and an arrangement is entered into that they shall meet for that purpose, thirty against thirty. Upon which he returns to his friends, and relates to them the result of his interview, stating that it is determined they shall meet together, with their companions,

“Men properly chosen, who know well how to wield the lance, the battle-axe, the sword, and heavy dagger.”*

“S’y feroit bon choisir qui bien feroit de lance
Et de hache, et d’espée at de dague pesante.”

Upon this his friends express their approbation, and request him to choose his retinue ; and there is a promptness in the manner in which the offer is made, and accepted, that is very striking.

“Prenes qu’il vous plaira, très nobile baron.
Je pren Tintiulac à Dieu soit beneichon
Et Guy de Rochefort et Charuel le bon, &c.”

* A sort of sword, shorter than that generally used, but broader, and worn, at the right side, like a dagger.

"Take whom you please, most noble Baron." "I take Tinteniach, to God be thanks; and Guy de Rochefort, and Charruel the Good; William de la Marche, and Robin Raguene; Huon de Saint Yvon; Caro de Bodegat,* whom I should not forget; Geoffroy de Bois,† of great renown; Oliver Arrel, the valiant Breton; and John Rousselot, of the Lion Heart. If these will not defend themselves gallantly against the felonious Pembroke, I shall be much deceived in my expectations."

He then proceeds to select his esquires, whose names are given as follows.

"Guillaume de Montauban, Alain de Tinteniach, Tristan de Pestivien, Alan de Keraurais and his Uncle Oliver, Louis Guion of the two handed sword: Hugues Capus the Prudent, and Geoffroy de la Roche. 'If these do not defend themselves well against the rapacious Pembroke, they never more deserve to gird on a sword of steel.'"

"Se ceulx ne se deffendent de Bourcbourg le merchier,
Jamais ils ne deuroient chandre de branc d'achier."

He also selected Geoffroy Poulart, Maurice de Treziguidi, Guion de Pont blanc, Maurice du Parc, Geoffroy de Beaucorps, and Geoffroy Mellon—

"All whom he called, returned him their thanks; they were all present and ready in attendance."

Beaumanoir also selected John de Serent, Guillaume de la Lande, Oliver Monteville, and Symon Richard—

"All ready to put their hearts and bodies to the risk, and all assembled without delay."

Sir Robert Pembroke, on his part, chose thirty combatants, whose names were as follow:

KNIGHTS.

Robert Knolles
Hervé de Lexuale
Hul De Caverlay

Richard de la Lande
Thommelin Belifort ‡
Thommelin Hualton.

ESQUIRES.

Jean Plesanton
Richard-le-Gaillard
Hucheton de Clamaban
Repefort
Jenequin de Betonchamp

Hennequin Herouart
Hennequin-le-Marechal
Boutet d'Aspremont
Hugues-le-Gaillard.

MEN AT ARMS.

Croquart
Walter Lallemand
Robinet Melipart

Troussel
Robin Ades
Perrot de Gannelon

* Caron de Bosedegas, MS.

† Guiffrai de Bones, MS.

‡ He fought with an iron mace, weighing twenty-five pounds.

Isanny-le-Hardi
Dagge-worth
Helcoq
Helicon-le-Musart
Hubinet Vitart

Guillemin-le-Gaillard
Rango-le-Couart
Jennequin-Taillard
Dardaine.

"Of these, twenty were English, bold as lions,
Six were Germans, and four Brabantians,
Armed in mail, bacinets and haubergeons,
With swords and daggers, lances and falchions."

Having marshalled his attendants, Beaumanoir addresses them in a speech which strongly marks the character of the times, and the high sense of honour which prevailed; for instead of disparaging the courage of his enemies, in order to inspire his followers with better confidence, as is sometimes done in modern times, he, on the contrary, assures them that they have to deal with men of valour, and warns them of the necessity of exerting themselves to the utmost.

"Seigneurs, dit Beaumanoir, o le hardy visage
Ja trouverois Englois qui sunt de grant courage, &c."

Pembroke, also, on his part, addresses his companions, and tells them that he had caused the books of Merlin to be consulted, and that they assured him of success.

The parties having arrived on the ground, Pembroke proposes a parley and a postponement of the combat; which Beaumanoir rejects. The fight then commences, and the first shock is terrible; Charruel is taken prisoner;* the valiant Tristan is struck to the ground with a mace; and so are Rousselot and Bodegat. The poem then proceeds to give a particular description of the combat, of which the following translated extracts may suffice:

"Mighty was the conflict on the grassy plain; Caro of Bodegat was stunned by a mace, and the valiant Tristan smitten to death. Then he cried aloud, 'Beaumanoir, where art thou? here, the English have seized upon me, wounded and overthrown; but I never despair of victory on the day I see thee near me, &c.'"

"Mighty was the conflict in the midst of the field, and the carnage horrible, and fierce the tumult. The Bretons are worsted; I relate no falsehood, for two of them are slain, and three are prisoners; and there are but five and twenty engaged in the fight. But Geoffroy de la Roche, an esquire of most high and noble ancestry, demands the order of knighthood, and Beaumanoir confers it on him, in the name of St. Mary, and says unto him, 'Good gentle son, spare not thyself;

* He was afterwards rescued, and joined the fight.

remind thee of him who, by his order of knighthood, was at Constantinople, in the company of such honourable associates ; and I swear that the English shall pay the cost of thy knighting before the hour of vespers.' Pembroke heard him, but he considered not his valour, nor his noble conduct ; and he said to Beaumanoir, with much confidence, 'Surrender thee, Beaumanoir, and I will not injure thee : but I will present thee as a captive to my mistress, for I promised her, and shall not deceive her, that to-day I would bring thee to her fair abode.' And Beaumanoir answered, 'I have other things in contemplation, and I purpose them much, together with all my companions, that if it please the King of Glory and Saint Mary, and the good Saint Yves, in whom I strongly trust, when the die is cast, the hazard falls on thee ; and thy life will not be long.' Alan de Keranrais heard the words, and said to Pembroke, 'Unworthy wretch, what meanest thou ? Thinkest thou thus to treat a man of such renown ? 'tis I myself that defy thee this day on his behalf ; and now will I strike thee down with my tranchant sword.' Alan de Keranrais, at the same moment, struck him with his sharp-headed lance, in the midst of his visage, so that the iron head entered into his brain, &c."

"Mighty was the conflict and long its duration, and the carnage horrible on every side. It was on a Saturday before Lactare Jerusalem, and the sun shone bright. The heat was excessive ; each combatant exerted himself to the utmost, and the earth was reddened with blood. That good Saturday, Beaumanoir had fasted, and he now felt great thirst, and asked for drink. Geoffroy de Boues answered him immediately, 'Drink thy blood, Beaumanoir, and thy thirst will leave thee. &c.'"

"Fierce was the combat, and the rencounter deadly. Half-way between Josselin and the castle of Ploermel, on an exceeding pleasant plain, at the oak of Mi-voie, by a field of broom that was green and beautiful, there were the English close collected in a body, &c."

"Mighty was the conflict, never was known its equal. The English maintained their position, closely formed together ; none approached them but fell dead or wounded : they are all in one compact body, as if they had been bound together.* But William de Montauban, the brave and valiant, &c."

The poem here describes the manner in which he broke their column, by dashing, on his charger, into the centre of their square.

"Mighty was the conflict, and the battle obstinate. Tinteniach the Good, who was the foremost combatant, &c."

"Mighty was the conflict, doubt it not. The English are routed, who wished to exercise over the Bretons mastery and control ; but all their pride has ended in great folly, &c."

* In a note upon this passage, the French editor pays a high compliment to the coolness and discipline of the English troops (*le sang-froid et la discipline des troupes Angloises*), which at Cressy and Poitiers, and also at Fontenoy, until attacked by artillery, triumphed over the numbers and valour of the French army, inasmuch as, at the latter place, a column of English infantry sustained the shock of all the French regiments, which came on successively, only to break themselves in pieces against its immoveable mass, (*contre sa masse inébranlable*.)

Such is the general character of the *Combat des Trente*; whereof, to those interested in Breton antiquities, the foregoing specimens may not be unacceptable; and should any of our Cambrian countrymen take the trouble of comparing it with the compositions of our early bards, they will find, in many particulars, a very striking resemblance, especially in the ancient British poem of the *Gododin*. Like that, the Breton poem is divided into detached portions or stanzas of irregular lengths, from four lines to forty, and upwards. In the same manner, one particular sentence is repeated at the beginning of the several successive stanzas, as a sort of ground-work to build upon, and the same rhyme is continued for a considerable number of lines without any change. For example, of the commencing stanzas of the *Gododin*, one contains nine lines all ending with the letters *ei*, as

“Cæawc Cynhaiawc men y dehei, &c.”

The next contains the same number of lines ending in *wyt*,

“Cæawc Cymnifiat Cyflat erwyt, &c.”

Another contains seven lines ending in *an*; and the following has eleven lines ending in *awr*. In like manner, the *Combat des Trente* commences with a stanza consisting of twelve lines, ending in the syllable *ons*, and, in some instances, the same rhyme is followed for nearly thirty lines.

In the Breton poem it has been shewn, in the foregoing extracts, that several successive stanzas commence with the words *Grande fu la bataille*. The same order is followed in the *Gododin*; for instance:

“Gwyr a aeth Gattræth oedd ffraeth eu llu
Glasfed eu hancwyn a gwenwyn fu
Trychant trwy beiryant en cattau
A gwedy elweh tawelweh fu, &c.”

“Warriors went to Cattraeth, and loquacious was the host; for the bright and intoxicating mead had been in their banquet,” &c.

“Gwyr a aeth Gattræth gan wawr, &c.”

“The warriors went to Cattraeth with the dawn, &c.”

“Gwyr a aeth Gattræth gan dyd, &c.”

“Warriors went to Cattraeth with the day, &c.”

“Gwyr a aeth Gattræth buant enwawc
Gwin a med o eur fu eu gwirawt, &c.”

“ Warriors went to Cattræth, heroes of renown ; wine and mead, out of golden goblets, had been their beverage, &c.”*

The French poem, it must be owned, has nothing of the wild irregularity of the Gododin, neither does it display the genius and energy of diction which characterize that extraordinary production ; but there is, nevertheless, in many respects, a very striking resemblance between them. I will acknowledge that the characteristics which I have been noticing are not peculiar to these two compositions, but may be found in the ancient poetry of some other countries ; but, when I recollect the intimate connection which subsisted between Wales and Brittany, in the early ages, and how the Bretons transported the compositions of our Welsh bards into their own country, I am inclined to hazard a conjecture that the similarity of style observable between the *Combat des Trente*, which is evidently the production of a Breton, and the ancient British poems, must be accounted for, by the fact of the Breton minstrels having continued among themselves the style of the bardic school, as they did its traditions, and handed it down even to the later *Trouveurs*, who composed their poems in the French language. If this conjecture be correct, it will serve to establish another of those facts which appear so difficult to account for ; which is, that whilst the Principality of Wales and the *Cymraeg* districts furnished the nations of Europe with the materials of romantic fiction, and thus gave a new impulse to their literature, so they also supplied the very style and model of poetic composition, and laid the foundation upon which subsequent schools erected their various systems.

As the people of *Bas Bretagne* differ so materially from the other inhabitants of France in their language and customs, it may be supposed that they are not without some corresponding peculiarities in their national costume : and we accordingly find that they maintain as distinct a character in this, as in other particulars. Some of our countrymen, on observing this distinction, have been disposed to imagine

* This is the stanza which Gray translated in his specimens of ancient British poetry, commencing

“ To Cattræth’s vale in glittering row.”

that even in this circumstance a resemblance may be traced between the Bretons and the Welsh. But, on examining the subject, I feel satisfied that such an idea must be altogether erroneous: for, however upon a slight inspection some remote resemblance might be fancied to exist, yet if we refer to the general costume of the Welsh, at any period within these last two hundred years, as described to us by old people, and as still seen among the remains of old wardrobes, there is not the slightest foundation for this alleged correspondence as a national distinction. And even the Breton costume, I should apprehend, is not so much a distinct characteristic of that people, as the remains of an old style of dress, at one time very general throughout the greatest part of Europe, as may be seen in old pictures, and especially in the wood-cuts in old Dutch and Flemish books.

The first article of the Breton dress, that I shall name, is the *hat*, which is made of black felt, with a low rounded crown, but with a brim of enormous dimensions, something similar to that once worn by the Quakers of the old school, but much larger than any now in fashion among that people, and regularly turned up at the rim, all round. This description of hat must at all times be extremely inconvenient, and, therefore, though not entirely unknown in other parts of France, yet, with the exception of the Bretons, the French peasantry, wherever it is used, generally loop up the brim against the crown, forming by this contrivance a cocked hat, such as was, till lately, generally worn by military officers, and which doubtless explains the origin of that once fashionable incumbrance. In some parts of France, the same hat is seen, made of straw, though not looped up like those made of felt.

The next article is the jacket, which is very short, like that worn by sailors, and reaching (such a thing as a long coat being unknown) no lower than the waist, and this is worn by persons of all ages. But the principal characteristic of the Bretons consists in the enormously large breeches, which are made so full and so plaited, that they look more like a short petticoat than the same garment as worn in most other countries. This, however, is by no means to be considered as peculiar to the Bretons, inasmuch as the same

style of dress was once common in Holland, as may be seen in the old prints before referred to, and of which a recollection is still retained in the proverbial allusion to the magnitude of that portion of a Dutchman's wardrobe. The same characteristic may also be noticed in some of the Swiss Cantons. However, the Breton antiquaries contend, that this is only a remnant of the national costume of their Gaulish ancestors, and quote an expression of Martial in proof of their opinion, although it would be difficult to apply the description to the garb of the Bretons; especially when we remember that the particular garment which gave the designation of *Gallia braccata* to one division of *ancient Gaul*, was not, properly speaking, that which is now distinguished by the name of breeches, but the long trousers, reaching to the ancles, and at this time so common throughout Europe; and, indeed, in Brittany likewise, with the exception of some of the western districts, where the other distinction is retained.

In the district of Finistère, the male portion of the peasantry dress altogether in black; and when the population is seen congregated, as on Sundays, or other fête days, a stranger might be led to suppose, that the whole country was in general mourning, so universally is this colour used in the whole of their dress. In other parts of the country, the prevailing colour is a drab or gray, the trousers being made of coarse linen, though sometimes of a kind of linsey-woolsey, called *Daoulas*, from the name of the town where it was originally fabricated and exported. This word, which is the name of a river near Brest, seems very general among the Cymraeg Celts, though, in the countries now occupied by the Gaelic tribes, it is spelt *Douglas*; nevertheless in pronunciation the *g* is dropped. Thus *Douglas*, in the Isle of Man, is by the Manx people pronounced *Dhawlish*, evidently the same with *Darlish*, in Devonshire. The word is frequently supposed to be derived from *du*, *black*; and *glas*, *blue*; but its real etymology is *du*, *black*; and *glas* a *stream*. The latter word being frequently met with, in that sense, in the Principality, as *Morlais*, *Dulais*, *Blaen-y-glais*, *Claisfâr*, &c.

With regard to the costume of the female peasantry, it does not vary much from that of Normandy, and other parts

of France; the only difference I noticed was, that the Breton cap has long broad lappets hanging down on each side to the shoulders, which are sometimes pinned up to the crown of the head, thus forming broad loops at each side of the head, as low as the ears, and which some antiquaries would have us believe to be of great antiquity, and refer to the head-dress of an ancient Gaulish statue in proof of their opinion.

But there is one article of dress, common to both males and females, which, though not peculiar to the Bretons, yet must not be passed unnoticed, as it forms a very remarkable characteristic of continental costume. I mean the *sabot*, or wooden shoe, that disgrace to civilization, and especially to France, the most civilized of all the continental nations. We have occasionally seen wooden shoes in our own country, i. e. a sole of wood, with the upper part of leather; but the *sabot* is entirely made of wood, quarters, vamp, and all; without a single morsel of leather or any other material; being nothing more than a log of wood, with a hole scooped out to contain the foot, and having the point turned up like a crescent. As may be supposed, these receptacles afford but very hard and uncomfortable accommodation for the feet; and, therefore, to meet this inconvenience, it is usual to protect the feet by wrapping them round with rags, or as is more generally the case, with whips of hay, and then to stuff them into these excavated timbers, where, after a short time, this primitive garniture is seen starting out, and forming a long and irregular fringe around the ancles. I know not which is the most offensive object in a civilized country, that of actual barefoot squalor, or this remnant of the rudest and most uncouth efforts of barbarian ingenuity. Were the *sabot* confined to the Bretons, such is my dislike to that article of dress, that I should, from a feeling arising out of ancient consanguinity and national attachment, really sympathize still more acutely with the people in this, to me, mark of barbarism among them; but, when I see the same thing equally common in Normandy, Picardy, and almost every part of France, as well as in other nations of the continent, I am in this respect the more reconciled to its existence among our old allies and kinsmen.

It must not, however, be supposed that the French peasantry have no other kind of shoes, as they all possess, for their fête days, leathern shoes, like other people. But, nevertheless, the impression produced upon an Englishman, by the first appearance of the *sabot* is not easily effaced, and even its very sound in the streets is peculiar to itself: for the continued noise made in the French towns on a market-day, by the heavy tramp of the *saboted* peasants along the pavement, cannot be compared to any thing on this side of the channel.

Whoever examines his recollections of foreign countries, which he may have visited, will probably find that, while many have subsided almost into complete oblivion, there will still be some so vivid as, by their recurrence, to call up in the mind a perfect and correct representation of scenes which, without such aid, might remain altogether unremembered. Now it happens to myself that there are two descriptions of noises so domiciled in my ears, that I imagine I can never entirely forget them, or their accompanying localities. The one is the noise made by the march of the cows through the village of Chamouni every morning on their way to be milked; each cow having a harsh sounding square iron bell tied round her neck, forming, as they pass in procession under one's bed-room window, one of the strangest choruses imaginable, and often causing the recently arrived traveller to start from his sleep, and gaze towards Mont Blanc and the glaciers for an explanation of this, to him, unaccountable disturbance. The other is the noise caused in the streets of Morlaix by the tramp of the *sabots* in the market-place, and which, in fine weather, commences early enough to surprise the weary traveller before he has finished his morning nap, and increases more and more as the peasantry arrive from the country, until at length even sleep and fatigue give way to the more powerful effect of curiosity.

Having now exhibited the Bas Breton in his broad hat, wide braccæ, and heavy *sabots*; in order to complete the picture, there remains one characteristic more to be noticed, which is the walking-stick. This article, which I believe is peculiar to Brittany, is formed of a round twig, or sapling, of the usual length and size, having a part of the root attached,

and shaped into a knob at the end, similar to that of the large club-headed walking-stick occasionally seen in our own country. But, instead of the knobbed end being held in the hand, as is the practice among ourselves; here, on the contrary, the small end is held in the hand, while the knob rests on the ground; and, in order to prevent its slipping out of the grasp, a piece of string is passed through a hole near the upper end, thus forming a loop, which may be placed about the wrist, or the hand, after the fashion of the little pocket bludgeon, or staff of office, carried by our constables. From the formidable appearance of this weapon, and the security which is provided for holding it firm in the grasp, a suspicion might be entertained that it is sometimes employed in services of a less peaceful nature than that of affording assistance in walking. But, when the universality of its appearance is considered, as even the very priests carry it with them in their walks, it is evident, that whatever offensive designs may have given rise to the practice, it is now continued as a matter of custom only. However, on inquiry respecting the habits of the Bretons, I am inclined to think, that as they once rivalled their Cornish relatives in the art of wrestling, so this club-shaped baton is only a memorial of the amusement of single-stick, still retained in the west of England. I have likewise heard it remarked, that a few years ago, the Bretons were exceedingly expert in the use of that formidable weapon, called a *quarterstaff*, which, though once very general in England, and still seen in the hands of constables in some remote districts, yet, having of late years fallen much into disuse, may require some explanation. This article of rustic warfare consists in a rounded stick of ash, or other tough wood, about six feet long, and as thick as may be grasped in the hand without inconvenience, being of equal size from end to end. This stick, which is called *quarterstaff*, to distinguish it from the single-hand stick, is held in both hands near the middle, as shown in some of the old woodcuts to *Robin Hood*, and the *Pindar* of Wakefield*, and is then twisted about, and shifted from hand to hand, as may be most expedient for the purpose of

* Query. Prior. - EDITOR.

attack or defence. I have seen a man go through the exercise of quarterstaff with so much dexterity, that in whirling the stick around his head and body, such was the rapidity of its motion, that it assumed the appearance of the spokes of a wheel moving about him, thus rendering him perfectly secure against any attack with a similar weapon; and, when in imitation of striking at an opponent, he brought it down in its full length with a two-handed blow,—the effect was really terrific. If our old English yeomanry were as expert at the exercise of quarterstaff as this foreigner, the constabulary force, thus armed, must have been a most formidable body.

During my stay in Brittany, I had no opportunity of witnessing any contest, in either wrestling, cudgel-playing, or quarterstaff, and therefore cannot undertake to state anything respecting the present cultivation of those games; but I am rather disposed to imagine that the present race of Bretons have been so much occupied in contests of a more serious nature, both in their own and other countries, that the ancient rural amusements of the villagers have been superseded by those of a more military character, and the cudgel and quarterstaff have given way to the musket and the sabre.

In a former part, I signified my conviction that, however strong the resemblance may be which the Welsh and Breton languages bear to each other in their original construction, yet that, from various causes, so great a difference exists between them, at the present day, that the natives of Wales and Brittany are not mutually intelligible, even in a single sentence of any length. But, notwithstanding this statement, which I had hoped was sufficiently corroborated by instances of personal experience, I have subsequently seen a contrary opinion advanced in an article by M. De Kerdanet, published in the "Cambrian Quarterly." I shall therefore give a few examples of the colloquial language now in use among the Bas Bretons, and then leave it to every Welshman to judge for himself, whether it is possible for any native of the Principality, without a knowledge of French, and by the bare assistance of the Welsh, to hold a conversation with a Breton, in the language of Brittany.

In a Book of French and Breton Dialogues, published at Brest, about twenty years ago, the following examples are given, among a variety of others, of precisely the same character ; and, as they are intended, not as illustrations of etymology, but as practical lessons for the use of those who would learn to converse in Breton, we must conclude that they are fair specimens of the language in daily use among the people.

PREMIER DIALOGUE.

Bonjour Monsieur ?
 Votre serviteur ?
 Je suis le votre.
 Comment-vous portez-vous ?
 A votre service.
 J'ai bien de la joie de vous voir.
 Comment se porte Monsieur
 votre cousin ?
 Il se portait bien hier au soir.
 Comment se porte Madame ?
 Elle se porte bien.
 D'où venez-vous ?
 Je viens de Rennes.
 Quelle nouvelle y a-t-il ?
 Je n'en sais aucune.
 Où allez-vous ?
 A Morlaix.
 Faites mes complimens à Madame.
 Je n'y manquerai pas.

DIALOGUE QUENTA.

De-mat deo'ch Autrou ?
 Ho servic'her ?
 Me so hoc'h-hini.
 Penaos ac'hanoc'h hu ?
 En ho servich.
 Ur joa bras am-eusd'ho queled.
 En Autrou ho quenderv penaos
 anezhan ?
 Yac'h aoualch e oa neizeur.
 Penaos e ra an Itron ?
 Yac'h manic.
 A belec'h e teût-hu ?
 Eus a Roazon e teuan.
 Pe seurt quelou a so ?
 Ne ouzon nicun.
 Pelec'h he zit-hu ?
 Da Vontroullez.
 Grit va gour'chemennou d'an Itron.
 Ne vanquit quet.

In case these observations should fall into the hands of any of our Welsh countrymen, who may be unacquainted with the French language, I shall give one specimen more, with an English translation.

What do you want ?
 Is the gentleman at home ?
 Yes, sir.
 Is he up ?
 An hour ago.
 Is he engaged ?
 I believe so.
 Who is with him ?
 He has company.
 Can I speak to him ?
 Soon.
 Where is he ?
 In his room.
 Shew me it.
 Have you breakfasted ?

Petra a choulennit hu ?
 An autrou so er guêr ?
 Ya Autrou.
 Savet ef-en ?
 Un heur so.
 Ampechet ef-en ?
 M'er gred.
 Piou so gantan ?
 Compagnunez en deus.
 Coms a allan-me outan ?
 Soudan.
 Pelec'h ema-en ?
 En e gambr.
 Discuesit-hi din.
 Dijunet hoc'heus-hu ?

Not yet.	Non pas choas.
Will you drink ?	Ha chouï a euteur efa ?
What you please.	Ar pez a guerrot.
Will you eat anything ?	Ha chouï a euteur dibri un dra bennac ?
When I eat in the morning, I have no more appetite all day.	Pam bez debret d'ar mintin, n'em eus mui a appetit en deiz.

The above are specimens of the commonest expressions in the colloquial language of Brittany; and, however unintelligible they may appear on paper, I can assure the reader that, when spoken in conversation by a native Breton, they are, if possible, still more so.

In a former part of the Tour through Brittany, a description was given of a Breton wedding, together with the ceremony of bidding or inviting the guests, which will be recognised by those acquainted with the customs of the Welsh, as bearing a striking resemblance to the usages still retained in the Principality. But, as these ceremonies vary in different districts, we subjoin the following invitation of the *Gwahoddwr*, as used in some parts of Caermarthenshire:

Arwydd fy mhastwn yn awr mi a fostia,
Y neges diammeu, fy nygws i yma ;
Ar ystyr y'm dodwyd, ar hast mi a'i d'weda,
Geiriau fy neges, yn gywir fynega :

Cennad pur ddifrad wyf attoch o ddifri',
Yn enw Gwahoddwr yn awr 'rwy'n cyhoeddi,
At Wr y tŷ yma, fe roddwyd arch imi,
I gofio'n ddigellwair, rhag ofn ei golli ;
Ei wahodd e'n gynta' yn rhwydd, a'i Wraig ganto,
A'i Dylwyth yn gysson, da dylwn i geisio ;
Meibion a Merched, hwy gânt eu mawr barchu,
Wy'n wa'dd yn buredig, at rai sy'n priodi,
Heb adael yr Wyron, ond nid am eich arian,
Ond am eich cwmpeini, da, digri', diogan,
Am hyn yn bentadol dymuna'i'n bwyntiedig,
Na byddo i chwi gadw y rhai cyflogedig,
Pob un wrth ei enw, yn hynod ei hunan,
Morgan, a Marged, a Sioned, a Siwsan ;
Am faint y Briodas, yn frwnt na fwriadwch,
Ond dewch yn wych addas, mewn urddas a harddwch.

Nesewch bawb attaf, ni chlywsoch chwi etto,
Mo hanner yr eithaf, sydd gennyf i areithio ;
Dewch feirdd i'r gamp honno, i harddu'r cwmpeini,
Ag arian'n eich pyrsau, ac aur wrth y pwysi ;
Er cariad, i'r unlle, cariwch yr enllyn,
Rwy'n gwa'dd Gwraig y tŷ yma, a choflaid o Gosyn ;
Basgedaid o Fenyn, yn nesaf, os ewyllysiwch,
I ddangos blaenorol, rhagorol hawddgarwch ;
Dewch bawb â'ch seigiau, rhowch dorthau o Siwgir,
Gwin yn alwyni, a Brandi, a Seidir,
Ychydig o Bysgod, ac Ych wedi'i besgi,
Maenllwn yn enllyn, Poreyn a Thwrci ;
Ystlys o Facwn, Gŵydd a Cheiliogwydd,
Wiau rifedi, Ieir yn ddiw'radwydd :
Ac fel y galloch, rhanwch y rheini,
Nid ydym ni'n disgwyl eich trysor na'ch tasgu,
Yn gynnysgaeddiad gwell ydyw geno'n
Eich 'wyllys, a'ch cariad, a'ch cwmgni, na'ch rhoddion.

Diwedd y Gân,
Diod i Forgan.

AN ESSAY
ON
The Comparative Merits of the Remains
OF
Ancient Literature
IN
The Welsh, Irish, and Gaelic Languages,
AND
THEIR VALUE IN ELUCIDATING THE ANCIENT
HISTORY, AND THE MENTAL CULTIVATION OF THE
INHABITANTS OF BRITAIN, IRELAND, AND GAUL.
BY
Branawc.

"Brân a gânt chwedl yn nyffryn."

"A Crow sang a saying in a valley."—*TRIADS.*

At the Abergavenny Eisteddfod of October, 1845, the principal Prize, a sum of £87 3s. was awarded to the Rev. Thomas Price, for the best Essay on "The Comparative Merits of the Remains of Ancient Literature in the Welsh, Irish, and Gaelic Languages, and their value in elucidating the Ancient History and the Mental Cultivation of the Inhabitants of Britain, Ireland, and Gaul." The Adjudicator was that celebrated Physiologist and eminent Scholar, the late Dr. Prichard, who prefaced his analysis of the successful composition with the following remarks:—"The writer of the Essay subscribed Branawc, (whose real name and country have been kept from me a profound secret,) has, in my opinion, fully merited the Prize to be awarded by the approaching Eisteddfod. His Treatise contains an able and masterly analysis of the remains of Celtic literature in its different branches. He has laid before the reader a clear and lucid account of the nature and constituent elements of these remains in the several Celtic dialects, and has not only displayed a sound critical judgment in the comparison of their respective merits, but has also selected, with excellent taste and skill, such extracts and specimens, from the productions of each age and language, as may enable the reader to follow him with ease in the survey, and to form an estimate for himself."

The Remains of Ancient Literature in the Welsh, Irish, and Gaelic Languages.

INTRODUCTION.

IN classing the subjects of the following Essay under their respective dates, it was found that the Literature of the Welsh, the first named in the list of languages, so arranged itself, as not to be divided according to centuries, but eras ; in two of which, viz. those commencing about the sixth and eleventh centuries, the rise and decline of genius are distinctly defined ; and by analogous reasoning, the reality of two others is presumed. The following is the arrangement which suggests itself :—

The First Period, which is here called the *Druidical Age*, is supposed to have commenced nearly two centuries before the Christian era, and to have continued until near the sixth century, when the genius of Poetry greatly declined.

The Second Period commenced with an outburst of genius, near the beginning of the sixth century, and continued until the eleventh, and at its close exhibited a similar decline of talent.

The Third Period commenced in the eleventh century, with another outbreak of genius, and has now terminated in the nineteenth, having seen the same stages in the progress of genius, of rise, maturity, and decline.

The nineteenth century is supposed to be an epoch from which a Fourth Period will date its progress.

The reality of the Second and Third of these Periods seems to be borne out by facts, but the first and last are mere conjectures ; should these conjectures, however, be found consistent with truth, the system would aid, in some degree, in elucidating the progress of mental cultivation, as it would show that the developement of intellect proceeds by impulses, at regular periodical intervals ;* such intervals, with regard to the Welsh Poetic excitement, occupying nearly seven centuries each. How far the Irish mind has been governed by the same laws, the scantiness of materials, and uncertainty of dates, will not authorize us to decide, but for the convenience of discussion, the Irish Literature, as well as the Gaelic, has been arranged under these Periods.

* For a further exposition of Mr. Price's opinions upon this subject, the Reader is referred to his "Essay on the Progress of Empire and Civilization," separately published, during his life-time, by Rees, Llandoverly, and Longmans, London.—EDITOR.

WELSH LITERATURE

OF THE

Druidic Period.

THE earliest compositions in the Welsh language, whose date has been ascertained, are those of the sixth century; but there are others extant, which, from their style and character of thought, are supposed to be much older, and to be the remains of the literature of the Druids. These are verses, chiefly in the triplet measure, called *Englyn Mihwr*, the Warrior's Stanza, consisting of three lines, the third of which contains a moral maxim, and is apparently unconnected with the two first. Lhuyd gives several specimens of this verse, at the same time signifying his opinion, that it is the most ancient kind of verse among the Welsh, and the one in which the Druids conveyed their instructions to their disciples; and though he does not assert that these specimens are actually Druidical, yet he gives it as his belief that they are old enough to be so, and leaves a strong impression on his readers, that he considered them to have been really composed by the Druids. The following, from the Myfyrian Archaiology, are of similar construction to those given by Lhuyd.

“Eiry Mynydd Hydd ar ffo
Gochwiban gwynt ym mlaen to
Nid ymgel cariad lle bo.”

Snowy is the mountain, the stag takes to flight;
The wind whistles in the thatch top:
Love, where it exists, will not conceal itself.*

It must be acknowledged that, however the Druidical origin of some of these stanzas may be alleged, yet, it is very evident that by far the greatest number bear the decided

* There is certainly a *real* connection, though not an *obvious* one, between these lines, for,—As surely as the snow is seen upon the mountain, as surely as the aroused stag flees, as surely as the cottager hears the whistling of the wind in his thatched roof, so surely will Love, where it exists, make itself manifest.

—EDITOR.

impress of Christianity, retaining however the ancient form of composition and arrangement of thought ; together with the ancient headings of the several stanzas, as "*Eiry Mynydd*," "Snowy Mountain ;" "*Marchwial Derw*," "Sprigs of Oak ;" "*Gorwyn blaen derw*," "Glittering the points of the Oak branches," &c. and, as in many instances, these stanzas appear to form mere collections, unconnected and unconsecutive, it is possible that some of them may be of great antiquity. It may be added that the few notices of Druidic composition, to be found in the classic writers, sanction the idea that this measure was used. Cæsar states that the Druids conveyed their instructions in verses, but does not specify the kind ;* and Pomponius Mela, who wrote in the first century, strongly confirms the supposition that it was of the triad or triplet measure, for he says that one of their precepts had become known ; viz. "That they should excel in war ; that souls are eternal ; and that there is another life to the departed spirits."

"Unum ex iis, quæ præcipiunt, in vulgus effluit, videlicet ut forent ad bella meliores, æternas esse animas, vitamque alteram ad manes."

Whether this is a complete triad, as some have supposed, or whether the words "ut forent ad bella meliores" are merely those of the author himself, we will not undertake to decide, but the words "Unum ex iis" seem to imply that these three sentences form one complete precept. It must be admitted that Pomponius Mela describes the practice of the Gaulish Druids ; but we are informed by Cæsar, that the tenets of those of Gaul and Britain were nearly identical, with the exception that the Druidism of the latter country was considered the most pure, and that the Gaulish nobility sent their children to Britain for instruction.

The next author is Diogenes Laertius, who wrote in the second century. According to his statements, it was said that the Gymnosophists and Druids communicated their tenets enigmatically and sententiously, [*in apothegms*,] and enjoined to worship the gods, to do no evil, and to exercise fortitude.

* Magnum ibi numerum versuum ediscere dicuntur.—*Cæsar, de Bello Gallico Lib. VI.*

— και φασι τους μεν γυμνοσοφιστας και Δρυϊδας, αινηματωδως αποφθεγγομενους, φιλοσοφησαι σεβειν θεους, και μηδεν κακον εραν, και ανδρειαν ασκειν.

Though, from the manner in which these precepts are assigned to two distinct races, it is possible that the author intended nothing more than to give, in a condensed form, the principal features of their respective religions, which, in these particulars, appear to have coincided; yet, when we compare this statement with that of Pomponius Mela, it is scarcely possible not to acknowledge a remarkable similarity, and, altogether, we may be justified in believing that we have here, at least, presumptive evidence, that the triplical style of composition, amongst the Welsh, is but a continuation of that in use among the Druids; and it may not be too much to suppose that some of the ancient anonymous triplets, quoted by Lhuyd are, actually, remains of the Druidic age.

The next class of compositions I shall notice is one which bears still more decided marks of belonging, either to an age anterior to the introduction of Christianity, or, to one in which Druidical tenets still prevailed. The compositions of this class are generally attributed to Taliesin; but it is well known that many of them bear the name of that Bard, merely in consequence of being found in the same manuscripts with some of his genuine productions, and of such is, undoubtedly, the following piece, which, according to the Rev. Edward Davies, contains a Druidical prayer or hymn addressed to the ancient British divinity Beli; and as it appears to have been originally composed in a triplet measure, as given by Davies, that arrangement is here adopted.

“Cein gyfeddweh
Y am deulweh
Lluch omplaid
Pleid am gaer
Caer yn chaer
Ry ysgrifiad
Firain fo rhagddaw
Ar llen caw
Mwyedig fein
Dreig amgyffreu

Odduch lleeu
Llestri llad
Llad yn eurgyrn
Eurgyrn yn llaw
Llaw yn ysgi
Ysgi ymodrydaf
Fur iti iolaf
Buddug Feli
A manhogan Rhi
Rhygeidwei deithi
Ynys fel Feli.”

The following is Davies's translation :—

“With solemn festivity round the two lakes ; with the lake next my side ; with my side moving round the sanctuary ; whilst the sanctuary is earnestly invoking the gliding king, before whom the fair one retreats, upon the veil that covers the huge stones, whilst the dragon moves round over the places which contain vessels of drink-offering ; whilst the drink-offering is in the golden horns ; whilst the golden horns are in the hand ; whilst the hand is upon the knife ; whilst the knife is upon the chief victim ; sincerely I implore thee, O victorious Beli, son of the sovereign Man-Hogan, that thou wouldst preserve the honours of the HONEY Island of Beli.”

It must be observed that Dr. Owen Pughe gives a different rendering of the words, and instead of a hymn of adoration or prayer, he gives the piece the character of merely an ode of celebration ; but still, in whatever way it may be translated, there is something so mystical in the words, and so little resembling the style of any Christian composition, that we may at least suppose there was a good deal of Druidical superstition remaining at the time of its composition, and also influencing the mind of the author.

But as the evidence of these compositions, being of the Druidic period, rests entirely upon their internal character, and as we know of no prose work that is even alleged to be of so ancient a date, we shall leave this division, and proceed to another, where documents exist of a less uncertain description ; and, in the meantime, we shall, according to the order already prescribed, review the claims of the other Celtic branches to the possession of the literary remains of this remote period.

IRISH LITERATURE

OF THE

Druidic Period.

THE Irish, like their neighbours, the Welsh, claim for their literature a high degree of antiquity, and some antiquarians unhesitatingly produce specimens of Irish composition which they allege to be of the fourth, and even of the third century. Others, more moderate, place these compositions as low down as the fifth or sixth century. After duly weighing the arguments of all parties, the safest conclusion appears to be that which we have adopted with regard to the Welsh remains, and that is, to admit the probability of there being, in the Irish language, certain fragments of a date prior to the sixth century, but that the evidences requisite to prove the fact are so few and unsatisfactory, that until something more decided is produced, this remote antiquity must be abandoned as untenable, and the sixth century taken as that of the commencement of existing Irish literature.

WELSH LITERATURE

OF THE

Second Period.

FROM THE SIXTH TO THE ELEVENTH CENTURY.

POETRY.

IN examining the Bardic remains of the Welsh, we cannot fail to notice two different periods of intellectual excitement and poetic cultivation of the language; the one commencing in the sixth century, when the Welsh people were assailed by the Saxon invaders, and the other in the eleventh century, when they sustained a similar assault from the Normans. Each of these two periods may be considered as an Augustan age, and, therefore, these epochs may be taken as the proper divisions of the present investigation. It would be foreign to the subject to enter into an

inquiry respecting the cause of those outbreaks of genius, at those particular periods; whether the people, being roused to action by foreign aggression, were upon each occasion animated by similar sentiments, and gave them utterance by a similar mode of expression: or whether there was, at each of these periods, some general excitement amongst the western nations, which, acting like an epidemic, impelled them to extraordinary exertion of mind and body, I cannot undertake to determine; I will only say that certain phenomena have, from time to time, made their appearance in the moral world which might, with some degree of plausibility, be adduced in support of the latter position. However this may be, the sixth century must be considered, not only as the period at which the earliest authenticated specimens of Welsh composition commence, but also as a time when the fire of poetic genius blazed out with a splendour, equal, if not superior, to that of any subsequent age: for here we find a constellation of Bards shining out all at once, which, from the testimony of succeeding writers, as well as from the specimens of their compositions still extant, were by no means unworthy of the elevated position assigned to them. These Bards were *Aneurin*, *Taliesin*, *Llywarch Hên*, and *Myrddin*; to which *Nennius* adds two others, *Talhaern* and *Cian*, but of these last no composition is known to be extant. The words of *Nennius* are these,—

“Tunc Talhaern Cataguen in poemate claruit et Neirin, et Taliesin, et Bluchbard, et Cian, qui vocatur Guenith Guaut, simul uno tempore in poemate Britanico claruerunt.”*

To these we may add a few others of minor note, and also some of doubtful date.

SIXTH CENTURY.

ANEURIN.

To *Aneurin* may not improperly be assigned the first rank amongst the early Bards of the Welsh; and this, not only on account of the genius he evinces, but also of the quantity of matter extant in any single composition: for his celebrated Poem of the *Gododin* contains upwards of a

* Stevenson's *Nennius*.

thousand lines; a considerably longer production than has been handed down as the work of any other Bard. This Poem, from the obscurity of its allusions, and the absence of historical documents, has been differently interpreted. According to some, it records a battle fought in the northern portion of the island, and which proved disastrous to the Britons, in consequence of their taking the field in a state of intoxication; whilst the Rev. Edward Davies maintains that it records the massacre of the Britons at Stonehenge, by order of Hengist, at the great national festival.

But, whatever the subject of the Gododin may be, the Poem itself has claims upon our notice as possessing very considerable intrinsic merits, some of which even “attracted the lofty muse of GRAY.” The piece may be said to be entirely of a Lyric character, the historical facts which are occasionally introduced, being merely alluded to, as matters too familiar and well known to require any further narration or explanation whatever. The Poem opens with a description of a warrior armed and mounted for the field, young, and in the full vigour of life, apparently betrothed, and looking forward to the bridal festival, and he is no sooner thus presented to the reader, than his death and elegy are as transiently touched upon, and the Bard hurries on to other warriors, many of whom are disposed of in a manner equally short and cursory.

“Gredyf gwr oed gwas
Gwrhyt am dias
Meirch mwth myngfras
Y dan mordhuit mygr was
Ysgwyt ysgafn llydan
Ar bedrein mein buan
Cledyfawr glas glan
Ethy aur a phan
Ny bi ef a fi
Cas y rhof a thi

Gwell gwneif a thi
Ar wawt dy foli
Cynt ei waet e lawr
No gyt i neithiawr
Cynt e uwyd i frein
Noc yr argynrein
Cu cyfeillt Euein
Cwl y fot o dan frein
Marth ym pa fro
Lladd un mab Marro.”*

Of manly soul was the youth;
Manful was he in battle,
A swift thick-maned charger
Was under the thigh of the stately youth.
A shield light and broad
Was on the slender swift flank.
A sword blue and bright.
Golden spurs and ermine—

* Mr. Price's citations are made from the edition of the Gododin published in the *Myfyrian Archaeology*, 1801. Vol. I. pp. 1—14; and he has generally adopted Mr. Pantón's marginal emendations of the text.—EDITOR.

It is not by me
 That hatred shall be shown thee ;
 I will do better towards thee,
 In poetic eulogy to celebrate thee.
 Sooner shall the ground be stained with blood,
 Than thou enjoy the nuptial feast.
 Sooner shall the ravens have their prey,
 Than thou again lead on the charge !
 My beloved companion Euein,
 Narrow is thy dwelling beneath the stones ! [carn]
 There is sorrow in the land.
 For the son of Marro slain !

After this short and abrupt opening, the Bard hastens on to another warrior, and, with the subject, also changes the metre.

“Caeawc cynhaiawc men y delei,
 Diphun ymlaen bun medd a dalliei
 Twll tal i rodawr yn y clywei
 Awr ni roddei naud meint dilynei
 Ny chyliei o gamhawn yn y ferei
 Waet mal brwyn gomynai gwyr nyt elhei
 Nys adrawd Gododin ar lawr mordei
 Rac pebyll Madawc pan atcorei
 Namyn un o gant yn y delei.”

Adorned with his torques, when the chieftain arrived,
 Honourably in the presence of the maiden he distributed the mead.
 Broken was the front of his shield ; when he heard the shout
 Of battle, he would give no quarter wherever he pursued ;
 He would not retire from the combat until he caused
 Streams of blood ; like rushes would he hew down those who
 would not retreat.
 Did not the Gododinian relate it, in the land of Mordei,
 Before the tents of Madawc, when he returned ?
 But one out of a hundred came back.

The Bard then proceeds with several stanzas, in the same metre, each commencing with the word *Caeawc*, for instance,

The torques-adorned chieftain, the ravager of countries,
 Like the rushing of the eagle on the sea-beach, when attracted by
 his prey, &c.

Also,

The torques-ornamented chieftain of tumult, the wolf of the sea-
 marsh,
 The twisted amber wreath adorned his brow, &c.

After which other headings are introduced to the stanzas, and each is repeated a few times, for instance : *The men who went to Gododin*, and, *The men who went to Cattraeth* ; the metre continuing the same, but the stanzas varying in length, and the same abrupt Lyric style being maintained throughout, without

the slightest indication that the Bard felt any desire to enter into any details of a narrative character. Some of the descriptive passages, though short and abrupt, are nevertheless exceedingly graphic and striking, as in the following, for example, where the boisterous character of the intoxicated army, on entering into battle, is contrasted with the stillness of the field at the close of the day.

“Gwyr a aeth Gattræth oedd ffræth y lu
 Glasfed eu hanewyn ae gwenwyn fu
 Trychant trwy beiriant yn cattâu
 A gwedy elwch tawelwch fu
 Cyt elwynt y lanneu y benytu
 Dadyl dieu angyu y eu treudu.”

The warriors went to Cattræth, loquacious were the host.
 The bright mead was their feast and also their poison.
 Three hundred [*chieftains*] were contending with their weapons;
 And after the tumult, what a stillness ensued!
 They should have gone to churches to do penance—
 The inevitable strife of death is piercing them!

The appearance of the army, marching towards the field, is also given in a similar spirited style.

“Gwyr a aeth Gattræth ygcât ygcawr
 Nerth meirch a gurmseirch ac ysguydau
 Pelydr ar gychwyn a llym wacawr
 A lluruceu clauer a chledyfawr
 Ragorai tyllei trwy fyddinawr
 Cwydei pum pymwnt rac y lafnawr
 Rhuwawn hir ef rodai eur i allawr
 A ched a choelrein gein y gerddawr.”

The warriors went to Cattræth in battle array and with shouting.
 With powerful steeds and dark-blue harness and with shields,
 With upraised spears and sharp lances,
 And glittering corslets and swords,
 They would penetrate through the embattled hosts.—
 Five battalions would fall beneath their spears.
 Rhufawn the tall, [*Their leader,*] he would give gold to the altar,
 And presents and honourable rewards to the minstrel.

Again, another leader is introduced in a similar style of sententious description.

“Ardyledawc canu cyman o fri
 Twrf tan a tharan a rhyuerthi
 Gwrhyt ardderchawc marchawc mysgî
 Rudd fedel rhyfel a eidduni, &c.”

It is an imperative duty to sing the chieftain of renown;
 The tumult of fire and thunder and tempest;
 Manly—exalted—the horseman of conflict,
 Who ardently desires the red reaping of war, &c.

This Poem contains a variety of metres, amongst which may be found a species of triplet with the last line of each stanza rhyming to the same line of the next, and forming, in reality, a complete stanza of six lines; and, sometimes, there are eight lines arranged in this manner, but the wildness and irregularity of the composition will scarcely admit of any classification of metres. And as is the metre such is the train of thought—wild, irregular and impetuous; sometimes we find a highly polished and classic passage, and then in a short space, to use the words of Davies, “we see the barbaric muse in all her native asperity.” The Gododin is not altogether destitute of the softer touches of pathos, as for instance:—

“Llawer mam a’i deigyr ar ei hamrant”—
Many a mother with a tear upon her eyelash.

But the general character of the piece is decidedly martial. We may sum up the description of this poem in a few words. It is strictly a *Lyric* composition, a succession of comparatively unconnected strophes, without the slightest tinge of the *Epic*, and even an almost studious avoiding of the *Narrative*; with abrupt, vivid, and highly graphic descriptive passages.

It was from this Poem of the Gododin that Gray selected the passage which he has called *The Death of Hoel*, and which he has given amongst his specimens of national poetry. Gray’s versified translation begins with the following lines:—

“Had I but the torrent’s might,
With headlong rage and wild affright, &c.”

There is also another passage, beginning, in the translation, with the lines,

“To Cattraeth’s vale, in glittering row,
Twice two hundred warriors go, &c.”

which, in the original, are separated by several strophes, though Gray has given them as if they had been connected, as he has also taken the licence to insert the name of *Hoel*, in the first specimen, which is not in the original. It is probable that Gray was supplied with the translation, previous to his putting it into verse,* from Evans’s *Dissertatio de*

* It is not a mere probability, but an acknowledged fact. — Vide Mason’s Notes to Gray’s Poems. — EDITOR.

Bardis, where selections out of the Bards are given, with Latin translations. The original of the first specimen commences thus,—

“Ar deulu Bryneich be’ch barnaswn
Diluw dyn yn fyw nis gadawsw
Cyfeillt a gollais, difflais oeddw, &c.”

And Evans’s translation runs thus,—

“Si mihi liceret sententiam de *Deirorum* populo ferre,
Æque ac dilivium omnes una strage prostrarem ;
Amicum enim amisi incautus,
Qui in resistendo firmus erat—
Non petiit magnanimus dotem a socero,
Filius *Ciani* et strenuo *Gwynwyn* ortus.”

The original of the other passage begins thus,—

“Gwyr a aeth Gattræth buant enwawd
Gwin a medd o aur bu eu gwirawd, &c.”

And Evans’s translation is as follows,—

“Viri ibant ad Cattræth, et fuere insignes,
Vinum et mulsum ex aureis poculis erat eorum potus.

Trecenti et sexaginta tres aureis torquibus insigniti erant,
Ex iis autem qui nimio potu madidi ad bellum properabant,
Non evasere nisi tres, qui sibi gladiis viam muniebant,
Sc. bellator de *Aeron* et CONANUS DAEARAWD,
Et egomet ipse [sc. Bardus Aneurinus] sanguine rubens ;
Aliter ad hoc carmen compingendum non superstes fuissem.”

Besides the above, there are several other compositions extant of the Bard Aneurin, three of which are called *Gwarchans*, which the Rev. Edward Davies translates, *Incantations*, and one of which, *Gwarchan Cynfelyn*, or the *Incantation of Cunobeline*, he seems to have satisfactorily proved to refer to the figures on the ancient British coins of *Cunobeline*, and which he supposes to have been considered as talismans, and that the figures represent objects connected with the tenets of Druidism. This discovery gives to the Poem an importance in an antiquarian point of view, of no small magnitude, whatever may be thought of its poetical merits. The following extract, from the commencement of the Poem, comprises the principal part of the reference to the coins :—

GORCHAN CYNFELYN.

"Pei mi brytwn pei mi ganwn	Tyllei garngaffon
Tardei warchan gorchegin	Rac carneu riwrhon
Gweilging torch Trychdrwyf	Ryfelfodogion
Trychethin trychinfwrch	Esgyr fyrr fyrrfach farchogion
Cyrchesit en afon	Tyllei ylfach
Cynn noe geinnyon	Gwryt gofurthiach."

The following is Mr. Davies's translation.—

CUNOBELINE'S INCANTATION.

"Were it that I performed the mystic rite; were it I that sung, a talisman would spring forth—the *high shoots*, the *wand*, the *wreath* of the *unobstructed pervader*. The most *hideous form*, even that which is cut off from the haunches, should be procured in the river, rather than his beautiful steeds."

"The [horse] which is hoofed with the capped stick, would penetrate before the high-tailed steeds of those who delight in war."

"With its *short bones*, and short diminutive riders, the horse with the *bird's beak*, would pierce the mean afflicter of heroism."

In confirmation of his views, Mr. Davies gives a plate of Ancient British Coins, which bear the figure of this mystical creature. And, when we compare the representation on the coins with the description given in the Poem, we cannot withhold our acknowledgment that the resemblance is too perfect to be considered as a mere coincidence: for we have on them the *hideous horse*, *cut off at the haunches*, with its *short bones*, hoofed with the *capped stick*, its *bird's beak*, and *short diminutive riders*, i. e. as Mr. Davies seems to infer, the *glain*, [ovum anguinu,] or Druid's beads, on the horse's mane.*

In addition to the above particulars, Mr. Davies recognises in this figure the head of Ceridwen, a Druidical character here represented by the bird's head with a small object in its beak, and explains it as the symbol of that mythological personage, as she appears in the history of Taliesin. For, in that story, it is said that, in order to insure the gift of genius for her son Afagddu, to compensate for his natural deformity, she commenced boiling the Cauldron of Genius, which must continue boiling for a year and a day, without interruption, and as one of its attendants she put *Gwion Bach* to

* These Coins have been so often engraved, that it will be sufficient here to refer the Reader to Mr. Davies's work, to the plates in "Camden's Britannia," and to the descriptive list of Ancient British Coins in "Akerman's Numismatic Manual."—EDITOR.

watch it. And as Ceridwen was one day gone out to collect herbs, according to her custom, it happened that three drops of the liquor of the cauldron started out, and lit upon the finger of Gwion; who, in consequence of the pain, immediately put his fingers in his mouth, and instantly became possessed of such knowledge, that he understood all the craft of Ceridwen, and knew that she was his enemy, upon which he immediately took to flight. And the cauldron burst in pieces, inasmuch as all the liquor it contained was poisonous, except those three drops. And Ceridwen now coming in, and seeing all her labours frustrated, she instantly pursued Gwion Bach, and when he perceived her approaching, he changed himself into a hare, wherupon she changed herself into a greyhound bitch, and gave him chase, and turned him towards the river. Upon this, he changed himself into a fish, and she immediately changed herself into an otter, and pursued him in the water. He then changed himself into a bird, and took to the air, and she again changed herself into a hawk, and continued the pursuit in the air. And Gwion being now nearly overtaken, perceived a heap of wheat on a barn floor, and changed himself into a grain of wheat, and Ceridwen instantly changed herself into a black-crested hen, and scratched him out of the heap of wheat, and swallowed him.

This, according to Mr. Davies, is the subject represented by the bird's beak on the coin, and the small object which it lays hold of. And it must here, also, be admitted that the resemblance is close enough to justify our conclusion that Mr. Davies has so far succeeded in his investigation. It must, however, be noticed that some have attributed the distorted figure of the horse, to the want of skill of the die-sinker; but the slightest inspection of these coins, will convince us that this want of symmetry is by no means attributable to the ignorance of the artist, as everything connected with it evinces a sufficient degree of skill to have approached much nearer to the form of a horse, had that been his object; not to mention that these coins, which are from different dies, and probably of different ages, all preserve the same characteristics of disjointed limbs, and birds' beaks; and, in some, the elements of this monstrous

figure are given in a disconnected manner: from which we may infer that the Coins and the Incantations all refer to some Druidical subject, which was handed down amongst the Bards till the sixth century, and thus became known to Aneurin, who introduced it in this *Gwarchan*.

The other two Incantations of Aneurin, viz. those of Adebón and Tutfwlech, are, on account of their obscurity, not of so much interest as the first, though that of Tutfwlech possesses considerable spirit, and refers to the battle of Cattraeth. Besides these pieces, there is but one other extant of Aneurin—the Stanzas of the Months, which are mere proverbial sentences put into rhyme, and descriptive of the twelve months, but totally unconnected, and with but very little poetical merit. The following extracts will be sufficient as examples of the style:—

“Mis Ionawr myglyd Dyffryn ;	Cynnwy march, distaw aderyn ;
Blin Trulliad, treiglad Clerddyn ;	Hir i blygain, byr brydnawyn ;
Cul bran, anaml llais Gwenyn ;	Gwir a ddywaid Cynfelyn,
Gwag buches, diwres Odyn ;	Gorau Canwyll Pwyll i ddyn.”

The month of January, smoky is the vale ;
 Weary is the Butler, roaming the Minstrel ;
 Lean is the Crow, unfrequent the sound of Bees ;
 Empty is the Milking-fold, unheated the Kiln ;
 Housed is the Horse, silent the Bird ;
 Long is it till morning, short the Evening ;
 Truly spoke Cynfelyn,
 Reason is to man the best candle.

In the month of August it is said,

“Gwell gwaith Cryman na Bwa.”

Better is the work of the Sickle than the Bow ;

evidently alluding to the use of the bow in war, and also in the chase, the similarity of form of the two objects, probably, suggesting the comparison.

TALIESIN.

SIXTH CENTURY.

The next Bard to be noticed is *Taliesin*, who, from his cognomen of *Ben Beirdd*, the Chief of the Bards, would seem to claim the most conspicuous portion in the present group ; but as it is not known whether he enjoyed this title in right of any pre-eminence of genius, or from some official privi-

leges, we can at present only rank him according to the merits of such portions of his works as have come down to our own times, and, in so doing, we certainly cannot in justice place him before the author of the *Gododin*.

The Poems of Taliesin are, like those of the Welsh Bards in general, Lyric Odes, chiefly heroic, some times highly spirited and poetical, abounding with transient bursts of description, of a superior order, but totally distinct from the Epic style, though sometimes bordering on the Narrative. The Odes of Taliesin generally refer to the wars of Urien, Prince of Rheged, a district in the northern parts of the Island, supposed to comprise the present Cumberland with part of the adjacent country. There are numerous compositions attributed to Taliesin, several of which are undoubtedly genuine, whilst others are as certainly spurious. Amongst the genuine productions of this Bard, we may safely name the Battles of Gwentystrad and Argoed Llwyfain, together with the Odes to Urien Rheged.

GWAITH GWENYSTRAD.

“Arwyne gwyr Cattraeth gan ddydd
Am wledig gwaith fuddig gwarthegydd
Urien hyn anwawd einenydd
Cyfeddeilly teyrnedd ai gofyn rhyfelgar
Rhwyg anwar rhwyf bedydd
Gwyr Prydain adwythein yn lluydd
Gwen ystrad Ystadl cad gynygydd
Ni ddodes na maes na choedydd tud addes
Diormes pan ddyfydd
Mal tonni ar tost ei gawr tros elfydd
Gwelais wyr gwyehyr yn lluydd
A gwedy boregat briwgig, &c.”

THE BATTLE OF GWENYSTRAD.

Translation [ni fallor] by the Author of the Dissertatio de Bardis.

“Extol the men of Cattraeth who with the dawn went with their victorious leader Urien, a renowned elder, the pillar of kings, of matchless valour, a chief great of power. The men of Britain came in a great body to Gwentystrad to offer battle; neither the fields nor the woods afforded shelter to their enemies, when they came in their fury, like the roaring wave rushing in its might to cover the beach. I have seen brave men in the army, and after the battle in the morning, the mangled flesh. I saw the place where the shout was given, and where three ranks of men fell, and where the crimson gore covered the ground. In Gwentystrad was seen a fort assailed by the laborious toil of warriors. In the pass of the ford have I seen men dyed with red, &c.”

The other battle is that of Argoed Llwyfain, fought betwixt Urien Rheged, the British Prince, and a leader of the invading army, called Fflamddwyn, or the Flame-bearer, who is supposed to be Ida, king of Northumberland, who, about this time, made a descent from the coasts of Deira and Bernicia with a large fleet, and a vast body of Angles. And although strenuously opposed by Urien, and the native Britons, yet ultimately succeeded in obtaining possession of the greatest portion of that country, and establishing the Angles there.

GWAITH ARGOED LLWYFAIN.

“Y Bore dduw Sadwrn cadfawr a fu
Or pan ddwyre haul hyd pan gynnu
Dygryswys fflamddwyn yn bedwarllu
Goddan a Rheged i ymddyllu
Dyfwy o Argoed hyd Arfynydd
Ni cheffynt eiryoës hyd yr undydd
At orelwys fflamddwyn fawr drybestawd
A ddodynt ygwystlon a ynt parawd, &c.”

THE BATTLE OF ARGOED LLWYFAIN.

From a Translation by Lewis Morris, A.D. 1763.

“On Saturday morning a great battle ensued,
Which lasted from sun-rising to its descent,
Fflamddwyn hastened in four legions,
Goddan and Rheged’s forces to fight,
They reached from Argoed to Arfynydd,)
But lived only one day.
Fflamddwyn loudly called in great hurry,
Will they [the Britons] give hostages, are they ready?
He was answered by Owain brandishing his spear,
They will give no hostages, nor are they ready.
And Cenau the son of Coel would be an enraged lion
Before he would give hostages to any.

In the forenoon Urien, the prince, with fresh men,
Called aloud, We relations will unite our forces,
And will erect our banner on the hills,
And will assist, and turn our faces above the ridge,
And will raise our shafts above men’s heads,
And will assail Fflamddwyn in his army,
And fight with him and his auxiliaries.

And because of the battle of Argoed Llwyfain,
There was many a corpse,
And the ravens were reddened through the war of men,
And the common people ran about hastily with the news,
I will remember the year until I am deceased;
And till I grow old, and of necessity must die,
Let me never smile if I praise not Urien.

The other compositions of this Bard in praise of his patron, Urien Rheged, are in the same abrupt sententious

style, and with much less narration, so as to make them generally very obscure; and, indeed, through the absence of any key to the allusions, for the greatest portion, totally unintelligible: and we may attribute to this difficulty the injuries which these Poems have suffered through the negligence of transcribers.

Besides the Odes to Urien, there is another Poem of Taliesin's, called *Gwarchan Maelderw*, The Incantation of Maelderw, consisting of upwards of 300 lines, and referring to the Battle of Cattraeth, and other events of that period, and also containing a great number of lines out of the Gododin. It is said that this poem of Taliesin gained greater applause in the Bardic contest, than the Gododin, and that because of its enumerating the warriors who went to Cattraeth. In a subject of such obscurity, and in the total absence of every clue to the object of these compositions, it would be an absolute waste of time to attempt any analysis, or comparison of their respective merits; but, from all the light that has hitherto been thrown upon them, we must, according to our present standard of criticism, give the preference to the Gododin.

There are also several compositions attributed to Taliesin, of a mythological character, some of which are unquestionably old enough to be ranked among his genuine productions; whilst there are many decidedly spurious, and some probably not older than the twelfth century.

LLYWARCH HEN.

SIXTH CENTURY.

The next Bard to be noticed, as belonging to this period, is *Llywarch Hên*, or the Aged. He was a prince of some territory in the north of England, the situation of which is not at present known, and was, upon the Anglian invasion, deprived of his patrimony, and obliged to seek an asylum in Wales. His works are numerous, and, with a few exceptions, may be looked upon as genuine. They are chiefly elegiac, and composed in the triplet metre; and refer altogether to events of his own day. The principal composition, with regard to extent, is the Elegy on Cynddylan, Prince of Powys, who fell in battle whilst defending his territory against the Saxons of Mercia. This piece contains upwards of a

hundred stanzas, and opens with the burning of Pengwern, the palace of Cynddylan, where, it appears, the Bard himself had found a hospitable retreat in his old age and affliction, and was now again compelled to seek another refuge.

MARWNAD CYNDDYLAN AP CYNDRWN.

“Sefwch allan forwynion a syllwch
Werydre Cynddylan
Llys Pengwern neud tandde
Gwaie ieuanc à eiddynt brodre.
Un pren à gwyddfid arno
O dianc os odid
A fyno Duw a derfid.”

Stand forth, ye maidens, and behold
The dwelling of Cynddylan ;
The royal palace of Pengwern, is it not in flames ?
Woe to the youthful whose home it was !
One tree with woodbine on it—
May it escape, perchance.—
What God wills, may that be done !

The Bard then, immediately, addresses Cynddylan, who had recently been slain, and, in the simplicity of his antique style, introduces a recollection, which, although it may not add to the dignity or pathos of the composition, yet, affords an undeniable argument in favour of the remote age to which it belongs :—

“Cynddylan calon iaen gauaf
A want Twrch trwy ei ben
Ti a roddest cwrwf Tren.”

Cynddylan, thy heart is now cold as the winter ice !
Thou who wert pierced by Twrch through the head !
Thou once didst distribute the ale of Tren !

He then proceeds with several stanzas, beginning with Cynddylan, as—

“Cynddylan calon goddaith wanwyn.”

Cynddylan, thy heart was once like the conflagration of spring.

Likewise, in the same manner, he has “Cynddylan of the heart of the Greyhound,” “Cynddylan of the heart of the hawk,” “of the heart of the wild boar, &c.” And, on one occasion, he evidently implies that the custom of burying in coffins existed at that time.

“Gan fy nghalon i mor dru
Cysylltu ystyllod du
Gwyn gwnawd Cynddylan cyuran canllu.”

How afflicting it is to my heart,
That black boards should be joined together,
Around the blessed flesh of Cynddylan, the foremost in a hundred hosts!

He then turns to the desolated dwelling of his fallen benefactor and, follows up the subject for several stanzas, as,—

“Ystafell Cynddylan ys tywyll heno
Heb dân heb wely
Wylaf dro tawaf wedy.”

The hall of Cynddylan is dark this night,
Without fire, without bed;
I will weep awhile and then be silent.

He then turns to the field of battle on the night following the death of the prince.

“Eryr Eli ban ei lef, &c.”

The eagle of Eli, loud is his cry,
He has drank fresh beverage,
The heart's blood of fair Cynddylan!
The eagle of Eli, loud is his cry this night.
Thou dost riot in the blood of warriors.—
He is in his [shrine of] wood, heavy is my woe! &c.
Brown-beaked eagle of Pengwern,
Loud is his scream,
Eager for the flesh of him I loved!
Brown-beaked eagle of Pengwern,
Loud is his screaming,
Eager for the flesh of Cynddylan!

The next composition of this Bard, as regards its extent, is his *Ode to his Old Age and to his Sons*; in which it appears that he had four and twenty sons, every one of whom fell in battle. He commences with a reference to his aged and decrepid state.

“Cyn bum cain faglawg bum cyffes eiriawg.”

Before I became hoary-headed and crutch-supported I was expert in speech.

And he pursues the same strain for a few stanzas, as—

Before I became hoary-headed and crutch-supported, I was daring, &c.
Before I became hoary and crutch-supported, I was comely,
And foremost amongst the spears was my lance, &c.

He then, immediately, addresses his crutch, “*Baglan bren*,” “My wooden crutch,” with which expression he commences several stanzas in succession, after which he addresses

several surrounding objects, in a desultory manner, but in the same strain of sentiment, and sometimes with considerable effect, as—

“Y ddeilen hon neu’s cynnired gwynt
Gyvae hi o’i thynged
Hi hên eleni y ganed.”

This leaf, is it not driven by the wind ?
Woe to it, of its fate ;
It also is old—though in this year it was born.

After having made several allusions to the achievements of his youth, he says,

“Tra fum i yn oed y gwâs draw
A wisg o aur ei ottoew
Byddai re y rhythrw’n y waew.”
Whilst I was of the age of yonder youth,
That wears the golden spurs,
It was with velocity I pushed the spear.

And he almost immediately proceeds to describe his sons, the eldest and bravest of whom was Gwên.

“Gwên wrth Lawen yd wylwys neithwyr
Arthur ni thechas
Aer a drawdd ar glawdd gorlas, &c.”

Gwên on the Llawen [River] kept watch last night ;
Arthur did not retreat—
The battle progressed on the green enbankment.

Gwên by the Llawen watched last night,
With the shield upon his shoulder ;
And as he was my son, he was valiant.

Gwên by the Llawen watched last night,
With the shield upon his shoulder,
And as he was my son, he did not retreat.

After several stanzas, of similar character, he states that Gwên was slain on the ford of Morlas ; and then he points to his grave, and says,

“Teg yd gân yr aderyn ar berwydd bren
Uch ben Gwên ; cyn ei olo dan dywarch
Briwai galch Llywarch Hên.”

Sweetly sings the bird on the fragrant tree
Over the head of Gwên. Before he was covered with the turf,
He broke the armour of Llywarch Hên.

And, even then, he seems unwilling to part from the subject, but devotes several stanzas to his favourite son:—

“Pedwar meis ar ugaint a’m bu
Eurdorchawc tywysawc llu
Oedd Gwên goreu o naddu, &c.”

Four and twenty sons I had,
Wearing the golden torques, leaders of the host ;
Gwên was the best of them.

Four and twenty sons I had,
Wearing the golden torques, princely chieftains ;
Compared with Gwên they were but striplings.

He then proceeds to name his sons, with an occasional brief description, in the same cursory and desultory manner. His son Pyll is introduced in the same abrupt style:—

When Pyll was slain, there were marky wounds,
And ghastly blood on the hair,
And on the banks of the Fraw scarring gashes.

A chamber might be formed of the wings of shields,
Which would hold one standing upright,
That were broken in the grasp of Pyll.

The chosen man amongst my sons,
When each charged his enemy,
Was fair Pyll, impetuous as the fire through a chimney.*

He then mentions others of his sons, together with their places of sepulture.

The grave of Gwell is in Rhiwfelen,
The grave of Sawyl in Llangollen,
And Llafyr guards the pass of Llorien.

After thus giving utterance to his grief, and occasionally lapsing into a mood of a somewhat querulous character, the old warrior seems to return to his native vigour and intrepidity, and concludes with the following stanza,—

“Teneu fy ysgwyd ar asswy fy nhu
Cw bwyf hên as gallaf
Ar Rodwydd Forlas gwyliaf.”

Thin is my shield on my left shoulder ;
Though I am old, yet whilst I am able,
I will keep watch on the encampment of Morlas.

The other elegies of this Bard are those on *Geraint the son of Erbin*, *Urien Rheged*, and *Cadwallawn*. They occasionally throw some light on the history of that period ; and from the simple and unartificial style of their construction,

* How much depends upon diction ! There is not in the English language a more mean and unpoetical word than *chimney*, unless it be *flue*, and yet their near neighbour *hearth*, ranks with the most dignified. With such a word, and that the only word in the language, to use in this translation, this expression of the ancient British Bard, which in the original is not destitute of poetic merit, is, in the English translation, an absolute example of the *Bathos*.

there is every reason to conclude that the occurrences mentioned, were either witnessed by the Bard himself, or else generally received, at the time, as matters of fact. Indeed, in some instances, the Bard adduces his own testimony in confirmation of his statements, as in the *Elegy on Geraint the son of Erbin*, he declares that he was present at his death, and commences no less than eleven stanzas with words to that effect, as—

At Llongborth I saw the tumult,
And the dead drenched in blood,
And warriors reddened from the onset of war.

Before Geraint, the opposer of aggression,
I saw steeds white with foam,
And after the shout of battle a fearful rushing.

At Llongborth I saw the gushing of blood, &c.

At Llongborth I saw a conflict, &c.

MYRDDIN WYLLT.

SIXTH CENTURY.

The next Bard to be noticed is *Myrddin*, better known as Merlinus Sylvestris, and Merlinus Caledonius, a name given to distinguish him from Merlinus Ambrosius, or *Myrddin Emrys*, the Bard of Arthur. Of the latter Bard there is nothing extant excepting the prophecies in the Brut, which are in prose, and their genuineness much too doubtful to admit of their being noticed in an investigation such as the present. But with regard to the other Myrddin, i. e. *Myrddin Wyllt*, there are some pieces extant which are attributed to him, several of which are beyond all question spurious, whilst others bear strong internal evidence of being, in a considerable measure, genuine productions of the sixth century, but greatly disfigured by interpolations, which later Bards were tempted to make, in consequence of the fame which the author enjoyed as a prophet. Amongst the productions attributed to this Bard, there are only two that can be adduced as containing any portions of his genuine composition, and those are the *Hoianau* and the *Afallenau*, both of which, on account of their allusions, and their evident interpolations, render it absolutely hopeless to attempt their interpretation without some further explanation than we are, as yet, in possession of.

It is true that the Rev. Edward Davies has undertaken to translate some portions of them, and, also, to explain them ; and, possibly, he may have succeeded in demonstrating their connection with the tenets of Druidism ; but, as the principles of that system were, even in the ages of its predominance as the national creed, so studiously and jealously concealed, we can hardly expect that they can, at this remote period, be developed through the faint light which may be cast upon them, by the few mutilated pieces that have come down to us. According to Mr. Davies, Myrddin Wyllt was attached to the superstitions of the Druids, which still lingered in the country, and lamented the exertions then made by Rhydderch Hael, king of the Strathelyde Britons, to extirpate them, and forward the progress of Christianity. In accordance with this view, Mr. Davies says that the *Hoianau* opens with an address from the author to the cultivator of Druidism, with a warning to betake himself to the more secluded parts of the country, in order to save himself from the enemies of his creed. Mr. Davies says that the Druid is here addressed under the designation of a pig, and adduces several authorities in proof of the fact of the Druids being often represented as swine.

HOIANAU MYRDDIN.

“ Oian a Phorchellan a pharchell dedwydd
Na chladd dy red cyr yn mhen mynydd
Cladd yn lle argel yn argoedydd
Nac erwys Rydderch hael rwyfadwr ffydd.”

“ Attend little pig—thou initiated pig ! Burrow not with thy snout on the top of the hill, burrow in a secret hiding place amongst the forests,—a place that has not been noticed by Rhydderch the Liberal, the champion of the faith.”

In the same strain of interpretation, Mr. Davies, makes the Poem of the *Afallenau*, or Apple Trees, to allude to the same subject of Druidism, and maintains that the Bard evinces his attachment to that system, and evidently refers to some of its mysteries. In giving the following extracts, it is requisite to observe, that the interpolations of later ages are to the full as distinguishable in this Poem, as in the foregoing, whilst there are many passages which exhibit equal proofs of genuineness.

AFALLENAU MYRDDIN.

A rodded i neb yn un plygeint
 A roed i Fyrddin cyn no heneint
 Saith Afallen bereint a saith ugaint
 Yn gyfoed gyfuch gyhyd gymaint
 Trwy fron trugaredd a tyfeddaint
 Un ddoled uched ei gorddoaint
 Un forwyn bengrech au gorchedwaint
 Olwedd ei henw oleuwedd ei daint."

"To no one has been exhibited at one hour of the dawn, what was shewn to Merddin before he became aged; namely seven score and seven delicious apple trees, of equal age, height, length, and size, which sprung from the bosom of Mercy. One bending veil covers them over. They are guarded by one maid with crisped locks; her name is Olwedd with the luminous teeth."

Mr. Davies remarks that the number of the trees is 147, a sacred number amongst the Britons, as appears from Taliesin, and he adds that this number is the square of 7 multiplied by 3. He also says, that the round number 140 often occurs, and is the computed number of the stones which completed the great temple on Salisbury Plain.

This piece consists of twenty-two stanzas, generally commencing with the words "*Afallen beren*," Sweet Apple Trees. It is very probable that the original had, as Mr. Davies maintains, a reference to the system of Druidism, for it is but reasonable to suppose, that much of that superstition still remained in the island, and, indeed, there may be discovered some traces of it even as late as the twelfth century, though, at that time by no means as portions of a distinct and independent religion, but merely as harmless and unmeaning traditions. However, in the sixth century the case was, of necessity, very different, for although Christianity was introduced into this country in the first century, yet, it could not have been publicly sanctioned till the time of Constantine, in the third century. In the fourth again, it lost the protection of the Roman government in all the remoter parts of the island, and suffered greatly from the incursions of barbarians and the unsettled state of the times, and we may suppose that the votaries of the ancient rites of Druidism, were not inactive in their attempt to reinstate their system. Indeed, from the writings of Gildas, as well as the lives of some of the ancient British saints, we may infer that the supporters of Druidism, or at least of some ancient heathen superstition, had succeeded,

to a great extent, in supplanting the Christian doctrines, and establishing a system of Paganism in their place.* But, in the fifth and sixth centuries, we find that new vigour was communicated to the church; a number of persons, in every part of the country, devoting themselves to the service of religion, and erecting churches, and establishing colleges, and other ecclesiastical institutions, many of which still bear the names of their founders, who are also themselves honoured with the title of saint, and a place in the calendar. We likewise read of certain princes affording their protection to some particular saints, and conferring on them grants of land, whilst other sovereigns evinced their hostility towards them, visiting them with persecutions. These facts are found not merely in the legendary tales of the middle ages, but are also supported by documents of undoubted authority.

Viewing, therefore, the state of the country in this light, the Poems of Myrddin assume an historical importance, of no inconsiderable magnitude; and, whether the elucidations offered by Mr. Davies may fully develop the character of the superstitions referred to in these compositions, or not, the existence of such native testimony is, to say the least of it, a curious and interesting feature in the history of the country, as affording proofs of the pertinacious nature of the ancient superstition, together with a record of the last struggle which took place before it was totally extirpated.

We have, in this Poem of the *Apple Trees*, internal demonstration of the author's connection with the northern part of the island, confirming his Appellation of *Caledonius*. Such, for instance, is the following:—

“Am ysgwyd ar fy ysgwydd am cledd ar fy nglun,
Ac*ynghoed Celyddon i cysgais i fy hun.”

* The lamentations of Gildas, upon the subject of this defection, are too well known to require repetition here. His charges are repeated by other writers of later periods, who appear to have drawn their testimony from other sources, for instance, John of Tynmouth, speaking of the Cambrian kingdom, [*“in Cambrensi regno,”*] in the north, says,—“*Regionis incolæ viam Domini relinquentes, et tanquam canes ad vomitum reversi ad idolatriæ ritum prolapsi sunt. Suscitavit tandem Dominus regem nomine Rederech, a discipulis Sancti Patricii in Hibernia baptizatum: qui in toto corde quærens Dominum, fidem Christi reparare in regnum studebat.*”

Also, in the Life of St. Kentigern, we find a similar statement.

“*Rex Rederech quem Dominus suscitaverat super regnum Cambrinum, videns Christianam Religionem in regno suo pene deletam, magnam operam adhibuit quomodo reparaverit eam*”

With my shield on my shoulder, and my sword on my thigh,
And in the wood of Caledonia I slept my sleep.

“Afallen beren a dyf yn Llanerch,
Angerdd ei hargel rhag rhieu Rhydderch.”

The fair apple-tree grows in the glade of the Wood ;
Its hiding-place has no protector from the chiefs of Rhydderch.

It has been supposed that *Llanerch*, which signifies a glade, is intended for *Lanark*, in *Strath Clyde*, the territory of Rhydderch Hael. Again,—

“Afallen beren a pren ffion
A dyf dan gel ynghoed Celyddon.”

A fair apple-tree, a blooming tree,
Grows in concealment in the wood of Caledonia.

Also,—

A fair apple-tree of sweetest fruit
Grows in a secret place in the upper wood of Caledonia.

It is said that Myrddin's appellation of *Wyllt*, or *Sylvestris*, was given him in consequence of his being deranged, and secluding himself in the woods, the cause of which is attributed to his having unintentionally slain his kinsman; and being engaged in the battle of Arderydd, he saw in the air some fearful and supernatural appearance, which drove him distracted. It is to this unhappy condition that he appears to allude, when mentioning his sleeping in the wood of Caledonia. He also refers to his wretched state, with a good deal of feeling, and contrasts it with his former honourable condition as a chieftain and a warrior. His expressions are to this effect:—

“And I am become a wild distracted wanderer, an afflicted out-cast, unclad with raiment—unsoothed—unvisited; and yet in the battle of Arderydd I wore the golden torques.”

“Ac yngwaith Arderydd oedd aur fy ngorthorch.”

There is, also, amongst the compositions attributed to Myrddin, one called *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer*, consisting of a dialogue between the Bard and his sister Gwenddydd, in which she inquires of him respecting the destinies of the Britons, and receives from him answers containing predictions of events, and the names of the several sovereigns who are to reign: from which it appears that some portions cannot be earlier than the tenth century, and probably none much later than that period. It is composed, generally, in

triplet stanzas, of which there are, in all, 141, though some are of a different metre. It is worthy of notice, that Gwenddydd, in this dialogue, addresses Myrddin by the appellation of *Llallogan*, twin brother, as, for instance,—

“Cyfarchaf i'm llallogan
Merddyn y chwedlau dysgogan.” *

I will ask my twin brother Myrddin concerning the predictions.
and—

“Cyfarchaf i'm llallogan Fyrddin
Gwr doeth darogenyd.”

I will enquire of my twin brother Myrddin, a wise and prophetic man.

Now this will explain a passage in the Life of St. Kentigern, in which it is said, that there was at the court of *Rhydderch Hael*, a certain idiot, named Laloicen, who uttered predictions; “—in curia ejus quidam homo fattuus vocabulo Laloicen;” and, in the *Scotochronicon*, it is stated that this Laloicen was *Myrddin Wyllt*.† By connecting these several particulars, we find an air of truth cast over the history of this Bard, as regards the principal incidents of his life, and there can be no reason to doubt that some of the Poetry attributed to him was actually his composition. Whether the following is to be considered as such, I cannot undertake to say; but it is much in the spirit of the rest—gloomy and mystical, and partaking of the supernatural, but in a strange train of thought, to which no other known system of legendary or fabulous ideas appears at all to bear any resemblance. It professes to be a dialogue between Myrddin and Taliesin. The concluding stanzas are as follows:—

- T. Saith mab Eliffer saith gwyr pan broffer
Saith gwaew ni ochel yn eu seithran.
- M. Saith tân afelin, saith cad cyferbin
Seithfed Cynfelyn y pob cinfan.
- T. Saith gwaew gwanon saith loneid afon
O gwaed cinreinion y dylanwon.
- M. Seith ugein haelion aethan yg wllwn
Ynghoed Celyddon y darfuan.

* In a marginal autograph note to Mr. Price's own copy of the *Myf. Arch.* Vol. I. p. 138. he says: “In the Life of St. Kentigern, Merlin is called Laloicen and Lailoken.”—EDITOR.

† See *Hanes Cymru*.

- Talesin* The seven sons of Eliffer, seven warriors, when they are tried,
Who seven spears will not avoid in their seven divisions.
- Myrddin* Seven burning fires, seven opposing armies,
The seventh Cynfelyn in every foremost place.
- T.* Seven thrusting spears, seven rivers full
Of the blood of heroes have filled up.
- M.* Seven score generous ones became wandering spirits,
In the wood of Celyddon they came to their end.

It is very probable that it is to the present Bard, Merlinus Sylvestris, and not to Merlinus Ambrosius, that we ought to look for the origin of much of what is contained in the Brut, as the prophecies of the last mentioned. It, also, seems evident, that it is to his Chwifleian that we are to attribute the origin of the Viviane of the Romances of Chivalry, and who acts so conspicuous a part in those compositions; although it is true that there is not much resemblance betwixt the two names. But, if we look into the Poems of Merlin Sylvestris, we shall find that the female personage of this name, which by the French Romancers might easily be modified into Viviane, is repeatedly referred to by the Bard in his vaticinations. It also seems probable, as Chwifleian signifies a female who appears and disappears,* and, also, as the word bears some resemblance in sound to Sibylla, that the Bard, by a confusion of terms and ideas, not uncommon in early writers, coined this name, as an appellation for some imaginary character, and thus furnished the original of Viviane.

Amongst the remains of Welsh Poetry attributed to the sixth century, there are several compositions, which, though, perhaps it would be difficult to establish as genuine, yet evidently are of considerable antiquity, and possibly not much later than that age; of such are the stanzas said to have been composed by Gwyddno Garanhir, when the sea burst over his territory of Cantre'r Gwaelod. It is stated that the space now occupied by the Bay of Cardigan, was once a fertile and populous plain, the patrimony of Gwyddno Garanhir, but on so low a level as to make it necessary that it should be protected against the sea by an embankment and floodgates, and that, in consequence of the latter being left open by *Seithenyn Feddw*, the Drunkard, in a moment of intoxication,

* Owen's Dictionary.

the sea broke in, and entirely overwhelmed the whole country. The Poem opens much in the style of Llywarch Hên's Elegy on Cynddylan. Gwyddno Garanhir calls upon Seithenyn to look upon the devastation he had occasioned.

“Seithenyn saw di allan ag edrych
Uirde varanres mor maes Gwitneu rytoes, &c.”

Seithenyn stand thou forth and behold the dwelling of heroes ;
The sea now covers the plain of Gwyddno !

Cursed be the slave, who after his carousal
Let loose the inundating fountain of the raging sea !

Accursed be the watcher, who after the conflict
Let loose the inundating fountain of the desolating sea !

A cry from the ocean is heard above the summit of the fortress,
Even to heaven is it sent :
How frequently after excess arrives interminable destruction !

A cry from the ocean is heard, above the height of the fortress,
Even to heaven is it sent.—Frequent after excess is seen restraint.

A cry from the ocean is swelling out the night, &c.

The cry from the ocean comes upon the winds, &c.

The cry from the ocean afflicts me this night, &c.

Although the Roman Itineraries forbid our adopting this tradition, as a correct record of any thing that could have occurred, to that extent, in the fifth or sixth century ; yet it is, nevertheless, possible that some such inundation took place on a minor scale at that time, or else that some more extensive catastrophe occurred at a period anterior to the Roman surveys, and which has erroneously been placed in the fifth century. But be the historical fact as it may, the lines are certainly old, and possess considerable poetical merit. The opening address to the wretched drunkard, and the call to him to behold the effects of his intemperance : the twice uttered malediction, and the cry of distress from the perishing inhabitants, borne on the winds over the heights of the fortress, all combine to produce as striking an effect as, perhaps, can be found in the same number of lines in any language.

There is also assigned to this age, but by no means authenticated, a dialogue between *Gwyddno Garanhir* and *Gwyn ap Nudd*. The latter personage is the Fairy King of the Welsh, and frequents the tops of mountains, where he holds

his elfin court in great pomp and splendour, and sometimes deigns to discover his magnificence to mortals, but it is only to tempt them to evil, for should they once enter his domains, and partake of his hospitality, they become his subjects ever after. There is in the Welsh language an ancient composition called *The Life of St. Collen*, in which it is said that the saint once being in his hermitage under the shelf of a rock, received a summons from Gwyn ap Nudd to attend him on the mountain top. This message the saint paid no attention to, until on the third occasion, when it was accompanied with a threat, he determined to go, and having prepared some holy water, he set out for the mountain. When he arrived there, he saw a magnificent castle, with troops of horsemen, splendidly equipped, exercising in front. He then received an invitation from Gwyn ap Nudd to enter the castle, and partake of the repast which had been prepared; he did enter the castle, and sat down at table, but on being pressed to eat, he refused, saying he did not intend to dine upon leaves; and upon that he took the holy water, and sprinkled it all around, and instantly the whole scene vanished, and left him on the mountain alone, with nothing around him but the green hillocks.

From his name and general character, I am inclined to think that this mythological personage is the original of the well known Oberon, the Fairy King of a great portion of Europe, and that he was adopted on the Continent along with the other heroes of Arthurian Romance. The name of *Oberon* was originally written *Alberon*, synonymous with *Gwyn*. It is true that in the poetical dialogue above mentioned, his Fairy character is not so prominent as in the legend, yet here he appears in something of a preternatural state: for, on being asked whence he comes, he makes answer,—

I come from battle and mighty conflict,
Where the shield was in the hand,
Where helmets were battered by the thrust of the spear.

And on being asked his name, he says,—

Round-hoofed is my horse in the tumult of battle.
I am called *Gwyn*, the son of *Nudd*,
The lover of *Cordelia*, the daughter of *Lear*.*

* In the *Mabinogi of Kilhwch and Olwen*, it is said that *Creirddylad* the daughter of *Lludd Llaw Ereint* [*Cordelia, daughter of Lear*] “was the most

Gwyddno then makes himself known, and they proceed to state their knowledge of events, by which it appears that both were present at the battle of *Caer Fandwy*, an event connected with much that appears fabulous, or at least mystical; and they conclude by each, in his turn, naming the spot where he saw some warrior slain, such as *Gwendolef* the son of *Ceidiaw*, *Brân* the son of *Gwerydd*, *Llachau* the son of *Arthur*, &c. after which *Gwyn* sums up his knowledge, by saying,—

I know where were slain the warriors of Britain,
From the East to the North,
And I also know their graves.

And *Gwyddno* concludes, by saying,

And I also know where were slain the warriors of Britain,
From the East to the South,
I know their death.

There are also many similar compositions extant, attributed to mythological characters: some containing allusions of so mystical a caste as to render them, in reality, quite unintelligible; others refer to *Arthur* and his knights, clearly betraying their later origin, as coming within the era of the Romances of Chivalry.

MEUGANT.

SIXTH CENTURY.

Two other Bards of the sixth century may be added to this list, though one of them, most probably, wrote also in the seventh. One is *Meugant*, of whom two pieces are extant; an *Elegy* on *Cynddylan*, the patron of *Llywarch Hên*, and a short composition, containing moral and religious sentiments mixed up with some predictions; the whole at the present time exceedingly obscure. The *Elegy* on *Cynddylan* is also obscure in the allusions, and though not destitute of spirit and harmony of language, is, nevertheless, to be considered as what it is entitled, *An Elegy*, a mere lamentation for the loss of his chieftain. The *Ode* commences with the following lines:—

splendid maiden in the three Islands of the mighty, and in the three Islands adjacent, and for her *Gwythyr* the son of *Greidawl*, and *Gwynn* the son of *Nudd*, fight every first of May, until the day of doom.”—*Lady Charlotte Guest's Mabinogion*.

“ Dyhedd deon die hir by
Rhiau a Rhirid a Rhiosedd, &c.”

GOLYDDAN.

SIXTH CENTURY.

The other Bard is Golyddan, of whose composition there is extant only one piece, an Ode of about 200 lines. This Ode contains numerous allusions to facts generally known as connected with the Saxon wars; Hengist and Horsa are mentioned by name, and several localities introduced, which are recorded as the scenes of hostile encounters, as, for instance, *Aber Peryddon*, which is supposed to be the estuary of the river Parret, the Pedridan of the Saxon Chronicle. It is probable that this Ode was composed in the seventh century, although the author was evidently of the school of the sixth.

MEMORIALS OF THE GRAVES OF THE WARRIORS.

Amongst the early Bardic productions may be seen collections of separate and unconnected stanzas, called *Englynion y Beddau*, the Verses of the Graves; and *Englynion Beddau y Milwyr*, Verses of the Graves of the Warriors, being memorials of the places of sepulture of about two hundred warriors and persons of distinction connected with the early history of Britain. They are chiefly in the triplet metre, and refer, generally, to Wales, and frequently to characters well known in history, though many of them are unknown, excepting through the medium of these short records. From the places of sepulture being generally upon the tops of mountains, and but seldom in the church-yards, it is most probable that the verses were composed before the latter mode of burial was adopted, and that the graves here mentioned are the cairns and tumuli which are still to be seen upon the mountains, and also sometimes in the cultivated lands. Whether the mountains were selected in preference to the valleys, or whether the progress of agriculture has caused the disappearing of these cairns and barrows in the cultivated land, is not quite clear; but it is certain that at the present day these remains are more frequently met with

on the mountains than in the valleys. These graves are of various dimensions, from such as might be supposed to mark the sepulture of an infant, and might be constructed by one or two persons in half an hour, to large mounds that would require the labour of a number of people for several days. They generally contain one or more square stone cells, which vary in size from two feet square to such as would afford room for several persons to enter them at once. The smaller cells seem to have been constructed for urns, whilst in the larger it appears that whole length bodies were deposited. The following are from the stanzas :—

“Piau'r bedd yn y mynydd
A lywiasai liossyd
Bedd Teyrfael hael ab Hyflydd.”

Whose is the grave in the mountain?
He marshalled armies ;—
It is the grave of Teyrfael the generous, son of Hyflydd.

“Piau y bedd yn yr allt draw
Gelyn i lawer ei law
Tarw trin trugaredd iddaw.”

Whose is the grave in yonder woody steep?
His hand was an enemy to many ;—
The Bull of Battle, Mercy to him!

“Piau y bedd yn llethr y bryn
Llawer nis gwyr ai gofyn
Bedd i Coel mab Cynfelyn.”

Whose is the grave on the slope of the hill?
Many who know it not do ask ;
The grave of Coel the son of Cynfelyn.

“Piau y bedd pedryfal
A'i bedwar maen am ytâl
Bedd Madawc marchawc dywal.”

Whose is the quadrangular grave,
With its four stones supporting the front?
It is the grave of Madoc, the intrepid warrior.

“Y tri bedd yng Nghewyn Celfi
Awen a'u dywad i mi
Bedd Linon garw ei ddauael
Bedd Cynfal bedd Cynfeli.”

The three graves on the ridge of Kelfi,
The *Awen* has declared them to me ;—
The grave of Linon of the rugged black brow,
The grave of Cynfael and the grave of Cynfeli.

“Bedd milwr mirein gnawd celein o'i law
Cyn bu taw y dan mein
Llachar mab Rhun yng nglyn Cain.”

The grave of a stately warrior; many a carcass was
made by his hand,
Before he became silent beneath the stones ;—
Llachar the son of Rhun is in the valley of Cain.

“Y beddau hir yn Ngwanas
Ni chafas eu dioes
Pwy fynt ai pwy eu neges.”

The long graves in Gwanas,
This history is not had,
Who claims or who disowns them.

SEVENTH CENTURY.

As the sixth century witnessed the awakening of the *Awen*, or Poetic genius, among the Welsh, so the seventh century saw it sink into a state of repose, from which it was not again aroused for nearly five centuries ; and the Bardic fire of the seventh century, although towards the early part of that period it burned with brightness and intensity, yet, towards the latter end of the century, when the generation of Aneurin and Taliesin had passed away, the flame gradually subsided, and for many ages we find scarcely anything deserving the name of Poetry. It is true there is no century in which we do not meet with some metrical composition, but the inspiration of the *Awen* is very languid indeed. The first of this cycle is *Elaeth*, who wrote about the latter end of the seventh century. He was originally a prince of some district in the North ; but having lost his patrimony, he retired to Wales, where he joined a religious community, and is registered as a Saint in the Ancient British Calendar.

ELAETH.

SEVENTH CENTURY.

There is but one piece extant of this Bard's composition, and that but short, containing only seven triplet stanzas. They are altogether of a religious character, and recommend pious exercises and early rising in order to perform them. He says,—

“O treinc mab dyn heb ymddiwin a Duw
Am a wnel o bechawd
Nis mad aeth eneid yn ei gnawd.”

If a son of man dies without being reconciled to God,
For the sins he has committed,
It is not well for him that a soul has ever entered his flesh.

TYSILIO.

SEVENTH CENTURY.

The next Bard is Tysilio, also a Saint. The only composition assigned to him, now extant, is a religious dialogue betwixt Llewelyn and Gwrnerth, two Saints of Powys. It is in the triplet measure, and contains thirty stanzas, several of them beginning with the old, and alleged Druidical, sentence of "*Eiry Mynydd*," "Snowy Mountain."

CYHELYN.

EIGHTH CENTURY AND PART OF THE NINTH.

There is but one composition extant bearing the name of this Bard, an Ode of twenty-two triplet stanzas, in a metre usual in the sixth century, and used by Aneurin and others. This Ode is, like many others of this early period, extremely obscure. The Rev. Edward Davies gives a translation of it, and maintains that it refers to the massacre at Stonehenge. From the absence of positive references, it would be difficult to disprove it, as it also appears to be no slight task that he has undertaken in his attempts to substantiate his theory. The language is regular and harmonious.

LLEFOET WYNEB GLAWR.

NINTH CENTURY AND PART OF THE TENTH.

Somewhere about this period, we may place the above Bard, Llefoet, of whose composition there is one Ode extant, called his *Gosymdaith*, or his Stock of provisions for his journey through life. This piece has but little merit, and is merely a versified collection of proverbs.

TENTH CENTURY.

It is to this century that we are most probably to ascribe the composition attributed to Merlin, containing some of his prophecies, which has been already noticed, as well as some other pieces, anonymous and spurious.

We may, also, notice a Bard of the tenth century, called *Bardd Glas y Gadair*, or *Geraint Fardd Glas*, who is supposed to be Asser Menevensis; the name *Asser* being alleged to be *Azure*, and a translation of *Glas*, blue. This is not

impossible, as Chaucer mentions a minstrel of the name of *Glaskerion*, which appears to resemble the Welsh name of *Geraint Fardd Glas*, or *Geraint Glas*:—

“And other harpers many a one,
And the Briton Glaskerion.”

The works of *Y Bardd Glas* are of the same monotonous and inanimate character with the rest of the compositions of this time, and, together with those, strongly confirm the impression that the poetical genius became more and more torpid from the sixth century down to the eleventh. And did we not know, from the Welsh Laws, that the order of Bards was then existing, we might suppose that this class of men had become extinct. It must be at the same time acknowledged, that they are not destitute of merit in the work they adopt, but it is extremely prosaic and didactic. The following lines, from Pope, will convey some idea of the spirit in which the compositions of this description are written, and the style in which the proverbial adages are strung together,—

“All nature is but art, unknown to thee ;
All chance, direction which thou canst not see ;
All discord, harmony not understood ;
All partial evil, universal good, &c.”

Besides the above Bards there are some others named, though of doubtful authority, such as Cattwg Ddoeth and St. Cattoc, who lived in the sixth century, but the pieces attributed to the latter scarcely confirm the assertion.

WELSH LITERATURE.

PROSE.

SIXTH TO ELEVENTH CENTURY.

ALTHOUGH the Welsh have preserved a large quantity of their ancient Prose compositions, yet, in the absence of evidence, there are but few that can, with any degree of confidence, be attributed to a period prior to the tenth century, and those few appear in a very imperfect state, on account of the unsettled nature of the Orthography. Amongst the remains which may be safely given as existing antecedent to the tenth century, are the ecclesiastical records written in the margin of the Book of St. Chad in Litchfield Cathedral

library; but they are so brief and obscure, and also so mixed with Latin, that they can hardly be called Welsh compositions. There are also, in the *Liber Landavensis*, numerous records in the Welsh language, consisting of descriptions of the boundaries and landmarks of church-lands, which appear to be taken from very ancient documents, and probably the identical words used in the sixth century, when the grants were made.

There are, also, other ancient compositions in the Welsh language, called *Triads*, some of which appear to be of very remote antiquity, whilst others bear marks of having been composed in the middle ages. Many of these *Triads* refer to subjects of the fabulous and mythological ages, and may be assigned to the Druidical period; others again seem to contain the germ of those legislative institutions, which in the tenth century were collected by Hywel Dda, and which form the basis of the code of laws that goes under his name, and some are historical.* But amongst these ancient documents, not the least interesting are those which relate to the

* The Historical *Triads* are extremely perplexing to the Historian, as it is difficult to decide whether they are to be considered as authentic records, or merely as ingenious fabrications. The collection in which they are found was made by Thomas Jones, of Tregaron, about the close of the sixteenth century, a time when the Trojan origin of the Britons had scarcely been called in question, and yet these *Triads* give a totally different, and more rational account of the colonizations of Britain. The character of this Jones, as an Antiquary and Genealogist scarcely admits a suspicion of forgery on his part, and these documents exhibit a consistency with historical truth far beyond what is found in works of prior ages. Indeed, were any well-read historian of the present day to undertake the framing of a system of colonization, he could not produce any thing more plausible than what is found in the *Triads*. The statement of Jones, respecting his being merely a transcriber, is also supported by certain indications of their being partially corrupted when he found them. For instance, in the account of the settlement of the Insular Britons on the Continent, it is said that they fixed themselves in *Ystre Gyfaelwg*, "*Yn Ystre Gyfaelwg*;" this the Author of *Hanes Cymru** supposes to have been originally *Yn Neustre ag y Faelwg*, i. e. in *Neustrie* and *Valois*. If he is right, it implies an old corruption of the text, as Jones must have been too well informed to have written it so. But the author of *Hanes Cymru*, in another place, rather impugns the authority of the *Triads*, as he supposes the word *Lloegyr* to be the British pronunciation of *Flavia Cæsariensis*, which, if correct, will overthrow the assertion of the name being given by the tribe of the *Lloegreys*. The same writer also supposes that the Welsh name of Armorica, *Llydaw*, and the Latin *Letavia*, are merely corruptions of *Lugdunensis*, as that country was part of *Lugdunences tertia*, and he adduces the instances of *Lyons* and *Leyden* in support of this assumed corruption. If, again, this is correct, the dropping of the termination *ensis*, in this case, will tend considerably to confirm his supposition respecting *Lloegyr*.

* Having written the present Essay under a pseudonymous signature, Mr. Price could not, of course, refer to the "*Hanes Cymru*" as his own work, its author being publicly known. He, therefore, mentions himself here in the third person.—EDITOR.

fellow-warriors of king Arthur, inasmuch as they contain the primitive and principal elements of the Romances of Chivalry; those extraordinary productions, which, at a later period, exercised such a powerful influence on the literature and habits of Christendom; for it is amongst these, and similar productions, that we are to look for the original materials which entered into the very ground-work of imaginative composition in modern Europe; as it is well known that the earliest style of composition in the vernacular languages of the west, was that of the Romances of the Arthurian cyclus, known as those of the Round Table. In these compositions, the principal characters are all of them Welsh, and most of the events are connected with ancient British traditions, and the scenes of action generally indicate a British locality.

HYWEL DDA.

TENTH CENTURY.

Next, in point of antiquity, are the Welsh Laws, of the Code of Hywel Dda, of which several manuscript copies exist, but this Code, it is believed, underwent some alteration in the eleventh century, as at that period several of the Welsh Princes are known to have revised the laws, and adapted them to the particular circumstances of their respective provinces. Of these laws, it may be observed, that they bear every appearance of being the genuine productions of Cymraeg legislation, inasmuch as no such resemblance can be traced between them and the laws of any other country, as to induce a belief that they were copied from them, or formed upon the same model.* Had any foreign code of laws served as their model, it is reasonable to suppose that it would have been the ancient Roman; but there is nothing to mark a resemblance. As to the laws of Justinian, they were not enacted until long after the Romans had left Britain, therefore it would be in vain to seek any model there; and amongst that voluminous collection of legislative enactments, of Pandects, Institutions, and Novellæ, the dissimilarity of every

* The Origin of Trial by Jury was suggested by His Excellency the Chevalier Bunsen, as the subject of the principal Literary Prize for the Abergavenny Eisteddfod of 1853. The mass of matter brought together in the works of the various Competitors for that Prize, and especially in the successful Essay of Mr. Stephens of Merthyr, deserves the careful study of future historians.

thing to the contents of the Welsh Code is singularly striking. Nor is there any stronger resemblance traceable betwixt the laws of the Gothic or Teutonic nations. It has been observed that there is one very striking difference in the mode of classification of the people—the Welsh classing them by tribes and families, a practice not known in the Teutonic courts ; from which, it is but reasonable to conclude, that the statement in the preamble to the code of Hywel Dda, is, in every respect, genuine and authentic, in which it is said, that after having consulted the codes of various nations, that prince found the ancient British laws of Dyfnwal Moelmud to excel them all, and that he therefore adopted them as the basis of his new arrangement. From this fact we are justified in concluding, that the ancient British tribes, who were the progenitors of the present Welsh, did at least enjoy the privileges of the *Jus Latium*, and for the most part, were, like some other Roman tributaries, allowed to govern themselves entirely by their own laws. Therefore, we cannot refuse to admit these ancient Welsh Laws, as amongst the most interesting remains of ancient Celtic literature, inasmuch as they represent to us a state of society, customs and laws, but little affected by Roman influence, either imperial or ecclesiastic.

The laws of Hywel Dda are divided into chapters and arranged. The general division is into three parts ; the first part refers to the rules and customs of the court ; the second contains the laws of the country ; and the third relates to offences, and also to the prices of various articles. Hywel Dda died in the year 948, having reigned forty years, during the last seven of which he was king of all Wales, the title that is given him in the preamble to his laws.

Besides the above mentioned, it does not appear that there are any compositions extant, in the Welsh language, of a date anterior to the eleventh century ; though there are some historical records to be met with, such as short chronological memoranda, together with some genealogical tables, as well as legendary notices connected with the lives of saints, which may possibly be of a prior time ; but the task of proving such to be the case, would be an undertaking scarcely within the scope of the present Essay, or likely to prove satisfactory, even were the subject of greater importance.

IRISH LITERATURE

OF THE

Second Period.

THE SIXTH CENTURY.

POETRY.

As it is an historical fact that ecclesiastical learning had made considerable progress in Ireland as early as the sixth century, there can be but little doubt that the vernacular language of the country shared in the advantages of the use of letters of that period. Indeed, it is strongly argued, that the Irish were acquainted with the art of writing long before, and made use of an alphabet of native construction, peculiar to themselves; but, however this may be, it is evident that they were not long in adopting the Roman alphabet, as that is the only one to be found in their books, notwithstanding that they have modified the sound of some of the characters, in order to adapt them to the requirements of the Irish language.

From the early introduction of learning, and the high reputation of the ancient Irish literati, we might expect to find that country rich in ancient manuscripts; and this expectation would be confirmed by the assertion of Lhuyd; who, having given a catalogue of British manuscripts extending to thirty-six columns, and an Irish catalogue of only six columns, says, "There are Irish manuscripts enough extant, to make a more considerable catalogue than I have given of the British; but, for want of further information, I must leave that task to some antiquary of Ireland or Scotland, as being, in all respects, much better qualified for the undertaking." What has become of these treasures is not known. It is scarcely credible that they should have been lost since Lhuyd's time; but, however that may be, if we compare the Welsh remains at the present day before the public, with those of Ireland, we must allow, that in quantity at least, the advantage is greatly in favour of the former. It is true that the Principality is indebted to the public spirit and liberality of one individual, Owen Jones, for the privileges it enjoys in this respect; and should such another benefactor arise in Ireland, it is possible that a new

field of antiquarian investigation might be opened to the world in this branch of Celtic Literature, as there was in the Cymraeg, when the *Myfyrian Archaiology* was published.

Of the ancient Irish compositions, those which claim the most prominent station, are the tales, both prose and metrical, which are said to have supplied the materials of Macpherson's Ossian. And, therefore, without, at this time, entering into the merits of the Ossianic controversy, I shall consider the Irish remains as they are given us by the Irish themselves; among whom, we cannot fail to perceive, they assume a character materially different to that in which they appear in Macpherson's Ossian.

Amongst the Stories of this class, the Irish have a regular Triad, i.e. "The three tragic stories of the Irish," which are "The death of the children of Touran," [clann Touran;] "The death of the children of Lear," [clann Lir;] and "The death of the children of Usnach," [clann Usnigh.] The two first Stories belong to the Tuatha de Danans, and the last is a Milesian Story.

THE DEATH OF THE SONS OF USNACH.

This Story claims a prominent position amongst the remains of ancient Irish literature, as it is, according to the allegation of Irish antiquaries, the original of Macpherson's *Darthula*, which name is merely a modification of that of Deirdri, the heroine of the Story, and which is sometimes written Deardir and Dearduil, though it must be allowed, that in the hands of Macpherson, the subject has undergone a very considerable change, and can scarcely be recognised as the same with that of the Irish copy.

The Story itself, in the Irish copy, bears some resemblance to the *Mabinogion* of the Welsh, with the exception of being, in a great measure, written in verse—the Welsh tales being altogether prose; and, it may be added, that the latter exhibit much greater spirit and variety of incident, together with a considerable degree of humour and drollery; whereas the Irish Tale is, as described, a *tragic story*, the prevailing character being that of melancholy.

In selecting this Story for the commencement of this section, i. e. of the era from the sixth century to the eleventh,

it must be admitted, that I am laying myself open to the charge of unauthorised classification ; and as I may be called to account for this arrangement, I shall therefore anticipate this objection by the following statements. The *Darthula* of Macpherson being attributed to Ossian, must, of course, together with all the Ossianic remains, be placed in the third century. But, on the other hand, there are some antiquaries, and those, too, persons of no small acumen as critics, who maintain that none of the Ossianic Poems are older than the eleventh century ; therefore, when I adopt, for the present occasion, the sixth century, the era assigned to the Poem under consideration by the Gaelic Society of Dublin, I feel that I am only steering a middle course, and at least avoiding the necessity of combating my adversaries single-handed, inasmuch as I profess merely to give the sentiments put forth, under the sanction of the learned body who have taken the subject under their consideration. The Tale opens with a magnificent banquet in the palace of the king of Ulster, and, for several pages, the description is in Prose.

THE DEATH OF THE CHILDREN OF USNACH.*

"A feast of convivial exhilaration, grandly magnificent, was given by Connor, (son of Factna the wise, son of Ross the red, son of Rory,) king of Ulster, in the delightful splendid Eman of Machna, for his grandees, nobles, and other gentry, at which the entire assembly were gay and cheerful. Then arose their professors of music, and harmony and poetry, to sound their melodious harps of sweet strings, and their bright splendid tympanis ; and to sing their poetic strains, their branches of consanguinity, and boughs of genealogy. These are the names of the Fileas that were then in the mansion, viz. Coffa the generous Druid, son of Conall son of Rory, and Gennan of the light-some countenance, son of Caffa, and Fercartni the Filea ; and Gannan the black-knee, son of Caffa ; and many more together, with Senchan, son of Olial."

The Story proceeds to relate, that Connor dispatches messengers to Scotland, to bring back Deirdri, and her husband Naisi, who had fled there from Connor, to whom Deirdri had been betrothed against her inclination. The retreat of this couple was on the western coast of Scotland, in Lorn, in Argyleshire, and they were accompanied by the two brothers

* For the original passages, the reader is referred to the publications of the "Irish Archæological Society." Though copied in Mr. Price's manuscript, it is obviously superfluous here to reprint what is already in the hands of the learned, and must be useless to others.—EDITOR.

of Naisi, Ainli and Ardan; and these three, the three sons of Usnach, give to the composition the title by which it is known.

When the party heard the invitation of the messengers, one of whom was the celebrated Cuchullin, they prepared to sail for Ireland, and having embarked, and put out to sea, Deirdri looked back at the Scottish coast, and recollecting the pleasant time she had passed there, “she raised the strains:”—

“ Delightful land, yon eastern land,
Alba with all its wonders!
I would not hither thence depart,
Did I not go with Naisi.

Lovely is Dunfy and Dunfin,
Lovely the Dun over them;
Lovely is the Isle of Drayno, too,
And lovely is the Dun of Savno.

Oh wood of Kone, Oh wood of Kone!
Whither, alas! Ainli would resort;
Too short I deem my stay there,
With Naisi in the west of Alba.

Vale of Laith, Oh in the vale of Laith!
I used to sleep under my soft coverlets;
Fish and venison and the delicious prime of badger,
Was my repast in the vale of Laith!

Vale of Masan, Oh vale of Masan!
High its hart's-tongue,* fair its stalks;
We enjoyed a rocking sleep
O'er the grassy harbour of Masan.

Vale of Urchay, Oh vale of Urchay!
It was the straight vale of smooth ridge;
A man of his age was not more sprightly
Than my Naisi in the vale of Urchay.

Vale of Eiti, Oh vale of Eiti!
In it I raised my first house;
Beauteous its wood;—upon rising
Delightful resort of the sun is the vale of Eiti.

Vale of the two Roes, Oh vale of the two Roes!
My love to each man to whom it is inheritance!
Sweet is the cuckoo's note on bending bough,
On the cliff over the vale of the two Roes.

Dear is Drayno of resounding shore,
Dear its water over pure sand,
I would not thence at all come
Except I should come with my love.”

* A species of fern; the *Scolopendrium Vulgare*.—EDITOR.

The Story is then continued in Prose for about three pages, when we have a short dialogue, between Deirdri and Naisi, in verse, in the same metre of quatrain stanza ; and then again the Prose narrative is resumed, and, in a short space, it is replaced by verse, which is always commenced by Deirdri, and is chiefly her own composition throughout. At the conclusion, the three sons of Usnach are slain by the troops of Connor ; and Deirdri, having uttered a lamentation over their grave, died there of a broken heart. The Lamentation contains twenty-one stanzas, and commences thus :—

DEIRDRI'S LAMENTATION FOR THE CHILDREN OF USNACH.

“ Long is the day without the children of Usnach ;
It was not irksome to be in their assemblage,
Sons of a king by whom sojourners were entertained,
Three lions of the hill of Huama.

Three attachments of the fair Britain,
Three falcons of the mount of Culan,
Sons of a king to whom valour made obedience,
And to whom heroes yielded homage.

Three mettlesome bears,
Three lions of the fort of Conrach,
Sons of a king to whom praise was wealth,
The three sons of the breast of the Ultonians.”

After six stanzas in the same strain, Deirdri says,—

“ After them alive I must not be,
Three that would rush through the midst of the battle,
Since my attached has gone from me,
I'll shed showers o'er his grave.

Oh man, who diggest the new grave !
Make not the tomb narrowly ;
I'll be over the grave
Reiterating sorrow and lamentation.

Their three shields and their three spears
Have often been my bed :—
Set their swords of steel
Over the grave, goodly weight !

Their three hounds and their three falcons
Shall henceforward be without folk of game ;
Three sustainers of every conflict
The three wards of Conall Carnach.

The three slips of these three hounds
Have forced a sigh from my heart,
It was with me they were in keeping ;
To see them is cause of sorrow.”

She then concludes,—

“ I am Deirdri without joy,
And I in the end of my life ;
Since to be after them is misfortune,
I will not be longer.”

“ After this lay, Deirdri flung herself upon Naisi in the grave, and died forthwith, and stones were laid over their monumental heap, their Ogham name was inscribed and their dirge of lamentation was sung.”

The story occupies, altogether, about thirty-five octavo pages, the greatest portion of which consists of prose, though the quantity of poetry intermixed seems to require that it should be noticed under the latter heading.

With regard to the date of this composition, I have given it as being of the sixth century, merely in deference to the opinion of the learned society, under whose sanction it has been published ; but I must own there are several circumstances which incline me to doubt this antiquity. In the first place, the amusement of Chess is frequently mentioned, which it would be difficult to show was prevalent in Ireland in the sixth century. In the next place, the structure of the verse is such as hardly to have existed at so remote a period, for it is a kind of verse often to be distinguished only by the eye and not by the ear. The language is also much more intelligible than that of the undoubted remains of the early ages.

On the other hand, the practice of burying under the *carn* is greatly in favour of considerable antiquity, at least of a time prior to the general custom of burial in church-yards ; though, according to the Welsh remains, it is clear that the former mode of sepulture prevailed amongst the Welsh to the close of the sixth century, and if we may argue from the tenaciousness with which that people clung to their ancient customs, we may suppose that the practice continued much longer. So that, perhaps, the safest conclusion would be that this story, in substance, is of the sixth century, but that it may, in the twelfth century, have undergone such alterations as to obliterate its original character, and give it those marks of a more recent construction, which are certainly perceptible throughout.

Having now disposed of this alleged specimen of the sixth century, and left it at least in a state of doubtfulness, we shall proceed to inquire respecting those remains of Irish Poetry which can, without dispute, be referred to that period. In this inquiry, although the field appears extensive, yet, in the present state of published Irish works, we lament to say that the harvest proves to be very scanty. According to the Irish Annalists, the sixth century was not deficient in native Bards: several are mentioned, as Cearnach, Sin, and Cenfaelad; but with the exception of a very few short pieces, their works are either totally lost, or else locked up in manuscripts, of which the existence, or at least the value, is not known to the public; and until the depositories of ancient Irish manuscripts have undergone a thorough examination, it will be impossible to pronounce upon the existence of such works. It is well known that there are, in several of the continental libraries, very ancient Irish manuscripts; as for instance at Rennes, St. Gall, and Milan, and some of these as old as the ninth century. It is possible that the works of the above named Bards may be in existence, as well as many others of equal antiquity.

Amongst the numerous fragments of Ossianic poetry, though many must be allowed to be comparatively modern, yet there is no reason to doubt that some are also of considerable antiquity. Amongst the latter, the Author of the *Claims of Ossian* places the Eulogy on Gaul the son of Morni, published in the Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, 1788; though the learned writer is not disposed to concede to it the date assigned it by Mr. O'Halloran, i. e. A. D. 155. However, from the style of the composition, and its resemblance to the works of the Welsh Bards of the sixth century, he seems to consider it as not later than that period. The piece consists of nearly ninety lines, in a short metre, and sententious, unconnected style, and seems but little else than a mere string of epithets, with not so much as a single verb to connect them together.

The following extract is from the beginning of the Poem:—

“ Goll, vigorous and warlike,
Chief of heroes!
Generous and puissant hand,
Meditator of glorious deeds,

Bulwark dreadful as fire,
 Terrible is thy truth !
 Champion of many battles,
 Royal hero,
 Like a lion, rapid to the attack,
 Ruin to the foe !
 Overwhelming billow,
 Goll, frequent in action.
 Invincible in the most dreadful conflicts,
 Great in the conflicts.
 Warrior of increasing glory,
 Hero of mighty deeds,
 Lion furious in action !
 Animating, harmonious Bard,
 Destroyer of Councils,
 Puissant, all-victorious, &c."

It must be admitted that Mr. Davies throws out strong hints, that this piece may possibly not be older than the ninth century; but as he forms a parallel betwixt it and some Welsh compositions of the sixth, it would hardly be consistent to refuse it that degree of antiquity.

In the library of Milan there is an ancient Irish manuscript, which contains several poetical fragments, apparently of very early composition. A transcript of one was made some time ago, and shown to an eminent Welsh scholar, who supplied a translation of the first part. The original commences thus,—

"Ad coidarc allail innocht b'am
 Trad lîm. tarport. Re. Scal fidu
 Onnuba, dubutch frigû clannjda
 gnaun rugchuir iarsin Cinmadur
 Pobrû bacundau Sê immingu
 Gabsasu lûr fomnent fent milh
 Soru sliuchtum echt. mau
 Sir asdailê nimtha dochumd
 Chid à abrama. y re ama
 IHTdalim ba brathir dam-matha
 thir sê. mu no idenan merynan
 Mars—ni duthiraisa bithingnaif, &c."

The following is the translation,—

"Thus Cinmadur, illustrious in fight, dealt blows and bitter death around. His trusty sword leaped on his foe, and fearful wounds inflicted. —With dreadful and confused laments they became lifeless lumps of clay, a dreadful breach he made that day, among the opposing hosts ; so much did he exceed the rest in fight.

"Take thou the erect captive : he who despises death and scorns submission, unlike the coward who succumbs, he braves his dark and hidden fate.

"Let all come here and gain instruction. Let this slaughter teach them. Here may the brother and the daughter, and tender nursing-mother view the heaps of slain: all victims to the grim practices of war. No fort was their protection. &c."

It may not be irrelevant here to notice that the Gaelic Society of Dublin, already mentioned, in confirmation of the antiquity of the piece called the *Death of the Children of Usnach*, adduces another Poem in the same metre—*Columkill's farewell to Aran*; which is confidently asserted to be the composition of the Saint, but which will probably be found to be of much later date.

"Farewell from me to Aran,
A sad farewell to my feeling;
I am sent eastward, to Hy,
And it separated since the flood."

In the course of the composition, which consists of twenty-two stanzas, there are several commencing, as in the former Poem, with the repetition of the first sentence to form the first line, as for instance,—

Alas! it's far;—alas! it's far,
I have been sent from Aran west,
Towards the population of Mona east,
To visit the Albanachs! [*men of Alba.*]

Aran, thou sun!—Oh Aran, thou sun!
My affection is buried in her, westward;
Alike to be under her earth pure,
As under the earth of Paul and Peter.

Aran, thou sun!—Oh Aran, thou sun!
My love lies in it west,
If within the sounds of its bell,
Alike is it for any one as to be in happiness.

Also,—

Aran blessed, Oh Aran blessed! &c.

The same society also gives a Poem of nine stanzas, in the same metre, entitled *The Blackbird of the grove of Carna*, from the works of Ossian, or *Oisín*, as he is here called. And also another Poem of twenty stanzas, in the same metre, called *The Poem of Talc son of Trone*; in which the same repetition of words forms a striking feature in the style, and of which the Editor of the *Transactions* observes, "Both these specimens are the genuine effusion of that genius that produced the Poems attributed to Oisín, all of which have such a uniformity of easy style, diction, and

metre, as pronounces them the work of one man, one over whose name is spread the veil of eternal oblivion, from the assumption of the name of the son of *Finn* in conversation with St. Patrick." And thus he leaves us entirely in the dark respecting the real author of the Poems attributed to Ossian, but evidently implies his belief that they are as old as the sixth century. Upon this opinion, all that I shall observe is, that if the address of Columkill is really the production of that Saint, and if the other two Poems of the *Blackbird* and *Talc* are, actually, of the sixth century, there can be no reason, whatever, for refusing a similar antiquity to Macpherson's originals, or even a more remote date. But, before all this is conceded, it will be well to wait until some further light is thrown upon the subject. We shall, in the mean time, proceed to consider the productions of a later period, and of less doubtful character.*

Amongst the publications of the Irish Archaeological Society is a Poem, called "*The Circuit of Ireland*," written in the year 942, by Cormacan Eigeas, Chief poet of the North of Ireland," and which describes the Circuit of the county made by Muirheartach, or Murtoogh, king of Aileach, [*Ely*,] in Ulster, for the purpose of exacting hostages from such chieftains as he thought likely to oppose his views. This Poem contains nearly 260 lines, and is written in quatrains, of similar structure to those already noticed, each line consisting of seven syllables, and each quatrain, or stanza of four lines, making perfect sense by itself, without any dependence on the following or preceding one. The Poem begins as follows:—

"O Muirheartach, son of valiant Niall!
Thou hast taken the hostages of Inis Fail;

* Probably, the following stanza may be as old as any of the above named productions:—

"Genair Patraic i Nemthur
Asseadh adfet hi scelaibh
Macan se mbiadha dece
An tan do breth fo dheraibh."

Patrick was born to Nemthur,*
As histories relate;
A youth was he of sixteen years,
When he was taken away captive.

* Kirkpatrick, near Dumbarton, according to some authorities.

Thou hast brought them all to Aileach,
 Into the stone built Grianan [*Palace*] of steeds.
 Thou didst go forth from us with a thousand heroes,
 Of the race of Eoghan of the red weapons,
 To make the great circuit of all Erin,
 Oh Muirheartach of the yellow hair !
 Whereas no longer lives Cuchillin, the comely,
 The beautiful foster-son of the just Conchobhar,
 On thee has descended the renown of his shield,
 Oh son of the son of Aedh Finnliath !”

The Poem is almost entirely taken up with the names of the places in which the expedition halted at night, and the names of the hostages they carried off with them. In fact, it is a mere chronicle in rhyme, with scarcely a single spark of poetic feeling throughout. It is, of course, valuable in an antiquarian point of view ; but is by no means worthy of being ranked with the Ossianic remains, as they are called. And as the foregoing comprise the principal Irish Poems hitherto published, of a date prior to the eleventh century, we shall proceed to the next department.

IRISH LITERATURE.

PROSE.

FROM THE SIXTH TO THE ELEVENTH CENTURY.

WHATEVER may be the intrinsic value of the numerous prose compositions in the Irish language, extant in manuscript, we can only lament that such a very small portion has been made accessible to the public by means of the press. For unless repetitions and duplicates abound to a very extraordinary extent, there must be a great number of manuscripts yet remaining unpublished, as we can hardly suppose that they have disappeared, to any considerable amount, since the days of Lhuyd. But, however this may be, there is one fact at least very certain, and it is that when we look for some composition in prose, prior to the twelfth century, in a printed form, we are obliged to acknowledge that we meet with little else than absolute disappointment. Now, in the middle of the nineteenth century, we might have a right to expect that the Brehon Laws should, long before

this, have been laid before the public; but, hitherto, they have been allowed to remain entirely unknown, excepting a few clauses noticed by some occasional commentator. We may, therefore, set aside this very important branch of Irish antiquities, as unavailable on the present occasion.*

The same observation will apply, also, to the Lives of the Saints, in the Irish language, as well as to the genealogical records of the country, together with the numerous ancient miscellaneous fragments, commentaries, and glosses, which are to be seen in manuscripts, and which are, in many respects, exceedingly curious, not only as specimens of the ancient language, but also as exhibiting the devotional exercises of the time.

However, there is one department in which Irish literature has been more fortunate, and that is the publication of Annals and Chronicles. For, through the industry of O'Connor, the ancient historical records of the nation have been laid before the public in such a form as to reflect much credit upon the learned Editor, as well as to place those national monuments in a condition to be accessible to the world at large.

Besides this publication of O'Connor, several ancient records of Ireland have been published by different Editors, as the Annals of Ulster, &c. which are chiefly written in Irish, but with frequent passages in Latin intermixed, and may generally be attributed to the era now under consideration, i. e. from the sixth to the eleventh century.

* It is said that, in the seventh century, three brothers of the O'Burechan family, named Beethgal, Boigalach, and Moeltule, the first being a Judge, the next a Bishop, and the last a Poet, compiled and digested the Irish laws, both ecclesiastical and civil, and called their code, *Brathaneimhadh*, i. e. the Sacred Judgments. The following distich is given as descriptive of it.

“Eaghluis, flatha agus filidh Britheamh'd dhi'os gachdlo'gh
Na brui'gh to aibh dar linn, na saor agus na gabhan.”

which is translated,—

“Quid sit jus Cleri, Satrapa, vatisque fabrique
Nec non Agricola, liber iste docebit abunde.”

“The priest, the prince, the bard, the man of art,
And peasant, from this book may learn their part.”

Will's Lives of Illustrious Irishmen.

GAELIC LITERATURE

OF THE

Second Period.

SIXTH TO THE ELEVENTH CENTURY.

POETRY.

It must be here premised that the terms *Irish* and *Gaelic* are not intended to designate any difference of language, or even of dialect, inasmuch as the language of the Celtic population of Ireland and Scotland is radically and essentially the same; but, in the present inquiry, we find a certain feature presenting itself to our notice, and occupying so prominent a position, that notwithstanding the identity of language, the identity of books, and almost the actual identity of words and syllables, we still find ourselves compelled to make such a separation betwixt the claims of the two countries, as to place them in two distinct classes. And this in consequence of the different interpretation which each nation gives to the same composition. The Scottish Ossian is a totally distinct creation from the Irish Ossian, though the Celtic original is the common parent of both. When Macpherson published his poems of Ossian, the Irish immediately cried out "These poems are our property, they are Irish, and we are in possession of the original manuscripts, and will convince the world of the fact by publishing them." They did, accordingly, publish portions of their Ossian, together with English translations; but their Ossian was no more like the Ossian of Macpherson, than the Nibelungen is like the Iliad, or Paradise Lost like the Shah-Naméh. It is true the names were identical and many of the incidents, but the spirit was totally and irreconcilably distinct. The Irish Ossian excited no feelings, but such as the world had long been familiar with, but the same work, as interpreted by Macpherson, called forth sentiments, which till then had never been felt. Macpherson's Ossian was a new creation, a world of imagination totally different to that which was previously known; and such a discovery could not long remain unheeded, accordingly we find that Macpherson's Ossian, in a short time, actually influenced the

poetry of Europe, and tinctured it with its own cast of thought. The work was translated into foreign languages, imitated, dramatised, and sung. It afforded subjects for painting, sculpture, and musical composition. In fact, with the exception of the *Brut* of Geoffrey of Monmouth, there is no instance on record of a single work, extending itself with such rapidity over the civilized world, and influencing the public mind in so powerful a manner; and, what is somewhat remarkable, both these writers disclaimed the mighty engines they had set in motion, as of their own formation, declaring themselves to be mere translators, and not the authors of these works.

Having, so far, established the existence of a new and original train of thought in Macpherson's Ossian, and that so peculiar, so evident, and acknowledged, as to be distinguished as the Ossianic feeling, it may not be out of place here, to make some inquiry, as to its actual origin, and first appearance; whether, prior to the publication of Macpherson's work, the Highlander, in reading or hearing these Poems in the original Gaelic, felt the identical impressions that he received from the English translation: or whether, even now, at the present day, the Gaelic Ossian produces the Ossianic feeling as awakened by Macpherson. No one but the born and bred Highlander, and he, too, equally conversant with the English and Gaelic, is competent to decide this question. It has sometimes been asked, and the answer has invariably been in the affirmative, but as invariably with the addition, that the original Gaelic exceeds the translation in beauty and in force; but it must not be overlooked, that this universal concurrence to enhance the value of the original, though it may be perfectly just, as regards beauty and force, yet at the same time, gives rise to some suspicions, that in this asserted superiority of beauty and force, is involved a difference of thought and sentiment. In order, therefore, to make some approach towards solving this problem, the following suggestions are offered; not with any expectation of coming to a decision upon the subject, but as merely making one move forward in the investigation. And if the analysis of mind, and the classification of feelings can, under any circumstances, be deemed worthy of attention, the present inquiry

will not be thought to be totally destitute of interest. In the first place, then, Macpherson's Ossian is in prose, measured, it is true, and constructed with much attention to cadence and diction, but most carefully avoiding every thing like metre or rhyme. The original Gaelic is in metre, and also generally, in rhyme, excepting where (as it is alleged,) corruptions have crept into the text. Nevertheless, these originals as printed by the Highland Society, have so completely the character of measured prose, or blank verse, that no eye, unaccustomed to Gaelic versification, could ever detect the existence of rhyme. The following, from the Poem of *Carriethura*,* will afford an instance:—

ORIGINAL GAELIC.

“Dh' éirich maduinn a' soills' o'n ear ;
 Bu ghorm air an lear an tonn.
 Ghairm an rìgh a shiùil gu crann ;
 Thàinig gaoth a nall o'n chruaich ;
 Dh' éirich Innis-thòrc gu mall,
 Is Carraig-thùra iul nan stuadh.
 Bha comhara beud gu h-ard,
 Teine dall's a thaobh san sinùid !
 Bhuail an rìgh a chliabh air ball ;
 Gun dàil bha 'garbh shleagh o chùl ;
 Chunnaic e gun chlàth a' gaoth ;
 Bha 'leadan air a chùl a 'stri ;
 Cha robh sàmhechair an rìgh faoin.”

LATIN TRANSLATION, BY MR. R. M'FARLANE.

“Surrexit matutinus (radius) elucens ex oriente ;
 Erat cœrulens super æquore fluctus,
 Vocavit rex sua vela ad (malum) arborem ;
 Venit ventus huc ab præcipitio ;
 Surrexit Innistorca lentè,
 Et Carriethura dux undarum.
 Erant signa maleficii in alto,
 Ignis coccus et ejus latus in fumo.
 Percussit rex suum pectus è vestigio ;
 Sine mora fuit ejus crassa hasta ab ejus tergo ;
 Vidit ille sine vi ventum ;
 Erant ejus crines super ejus tergo certantes ;
 Non erat silentiam regis vanum.”

MACPHERSON'S TRANSLATION.

“Morning rose in the east ; the blue waters rolled in light. Fingal bade his sails to rise ; the winds came rustling from their hills. Inistore rose to sight, and Carriethura's mossy towers. But the sign of distress was on their top, the warning flame edged with smoke. The king of Morvan struck his breast ; he assumed at once his spear. His darkened brow bends forward to the coast ; he looks back to the lagging winds. His hair is disordered on his back. The silence of the king is terrible.”

* Carraig-Thùra. Vide “Dana Oisein Mhic Fhinn air an cur amach airson maith Coitcheannta muinntir na Gaeltachd. Dun-eiden, 1818.” For the use of a copy of this very scarce work, in the correction of the text, the Editor is indebted to His Excellency the Chevalier Bunsen.

Nevertheless, we are assured by Irish scholars, that whenever these Ossianic fragments are ancient and in their original state, neither corrupted nor interpolated, they are invariably in rhyme, and in quatrains, or tetrastichs, each stanza being complete in itself. And this rhyme is only to be detected by an acquaintance with the rules of Irish prosody, which are exceedingly artificial and arbitrary. Mr. Davies, in his *Claims of Ossian*, gives illustrations of this system of composition, together with extracts from the Gaelic originals. The following stanzas are from the opening of the Poem, called *Oina-Morul** :—

1.

“ Mar ghluaiseas solus speur fo seclò,
Air Larmon, mòr, a's uaine tom ;
Mar sin thig sgeul nan triath nach beò
Air m'anam is an oidhche trom.

2.

'Nuair thréigeas filidh caoin a mhuirn
A chlàrsach chiuil san talla ard
Thig guth gu cluais Oisein o chùl
Mosgladh anma an tùr nam bard.

3.

'Se guth nam bliadhna thuit a ta ann,
Tional uile a nall le'n gnìomh,
Glacam-sa na sgeula nach fann
Cuiream sìos iad am fonn gun ghìomh.”

LATIN TRANSLATION.

1.

“ Ut movetur lux cælorum sub vapore
Super Larmone magnâ, cujus est viridissimus collis,
Sic venit historia procerum haud vivorum
Super meum animum nocte gravi.

2.

Quando relinquit poeta blandus suam blanditiam
Ejus citharâ canorâ in aula sublimè
Venit vox ad aurem Ossiani a tergo,
Expergefaciens ejus animam in torpore bardorum.

3.

Est vox annorum quæ ceciderunt, quæ adest,
Colligens omnia huc cum eorum factis.
Captem ego historias haud fuitiles,
Mittam deorsum eas in cantionem sine fraude.”

MACPHERSON'S TRANSLATION.

“ As flies the inconstant sun over Larmon's grassy hill ; so pass the tales of old along my soul by night ! When bards are removed to their place, when harps are hung in Selma's hall, then comes a voice to Ossian, and awakes his soul ! It is the voice of years that are gone. They roll before me with all their deeds. I seize the tales as they pass, and pour them forth in song.”

* Oigh-Nam-Mòr-Shùl.

4.

“Cha shruth tha dorcha fonn an rìgh,
 ‘Nuair dh’èireas e measg strì nan teud ;
 O làimh-ghil an Lutha nam frìth,
 Malmhina, cruth clìth gun bheud !

5.

A lutha nan teud a’s gloine fuaim !
 Gun sàmhchair air do chruachan ard,
 ‘Nuair shiùbhlas geal-làmh na stuaim
 Air clairsaich fo dhuan nam bard.

6.

Sholuis nan smuainte dorcha truagh
 Tha tarruing suas air m’anam dall ;
 A nighean Thoscair nan ceann-bheart cruaidh,
 Thoir cluas do chaoin fhuaim tha mall !”

LATIN TRANSLATION.

4.

“Non flumen, quod est obscurum, melos regis,
 Quando surgit e media contentione chordarum
 Ab manu candidâ in Lutha saltuum,
 Malvinâ, formâ concinnâ sine defectu.

5.

Lutha chordarum quarum est purissimus sonus !
 Sine silentio super tuis præcipiis altis,
 Quando pergit candida manus modestie
 Super citharam sub carmine bardorum.

6.

O lux cogitationum obscurarum, miserarum,
 Quæ se-trahunt sursum super meum animum cæcum,
 O filia Toscaris galearum durarum,
 Adhibe aurem blando sono qui est lentus.”

MACPHERSON'S TRANSLATION.

“Nor a troubled stream is the song of the king, it is like the rising of music from Lutha of the strings. Lutha, of many strings ! not silent are thy streamy rocks, when the white hands of Malvina move upon the harp. Light of the shadowy thoughts, that fly across my soul, daughter of Toscar of helmets, wilt thou not hear the song ? We call back, maid of Lutha, the years that have rolled away.”

These lines, though given in the original as one connected strophe, yet, in Mr. Davies's opinion, naturally resolve themselves into tetrastichs as he has arranged them. And in order to perceive the existence of rhyme, which is sometimes that of alternate lines, he says it is necessary to have recourse to the rules of Irish Prosody.

He observes that the Irish Grammarians have arranged the letters of the Alphabet into eight fanciful and artificial classes ; and they deem it sufficient, for the purpose of rhyme or correspondence, that a letter should be answered by one of its own class, agreeably to the following distribution :—

The vowels *a, o, u*, are broad ; *e* and *i*, small.

Diphthongs and triphthongs generally follow the class of the first vowel.

Of Consonants,—*c, p, t*, are soft ; *b, d, g*, hard :

ch, fh, sh, th, are rough ; *m, ll, nn, rr, ng*, robust :

bh, dh, gh, mh, l, n, r, are light ; *f*, weak, sometimes rough :

s is barren ; *h*, hollow.

Now, if we examine the foregoing extracts, we shall find, that the first stanza happens to be so constructed as to make the rhyme obvious enough, according to our ideas of assonance, but it will be seen that this is not a reason that would weigh with the Poet who composed them, therefore we shall go on to the second stanza. And here we cannot find anything bearing the semblance of rhyme, excepting in two lines ; but, according to the above canon, the other two also form a rhyme, i.e. the words *mhuirn* and *chul* form a legitimate rhyme : for as *ui* in the former is a broad diphthong, and *u* in the latter is a broad vowel, they are of the same class, and consequently rhyme together ; so also *rn* in the former, and *l* in the latter, are light consonants, and of the same class, and likewise rhyme together. Therefore, in spite of the eye and the ear of the un-initiated, *mhuirn* and *chul* form a perfect rhyme.

But the learned critic goes on to detect what he calls a *concord* or *agreement* in the verse, besides that of the ending words, and which is to be found betwixt the last word of the first line and some word in the body of the second, as also betwixt the end of the third line and some word in the fourth ; thus in the second stanza, *mhuirn* in the first line, and *chiuil* in the second make a concord, because *r, n*, and *l* pertain to the same class. Also, in the third stanza, we have the like concords between *ann* and *nall*, and again between *fann* and *fonn*, *nn* being robust consonants, and *a* and *o* broad vowels. Mr. Davies also points out similar instances of rhyme in other Poems : such, for instance, as *Lula* and *dhubhra*, where there is a double rhyme, inasmuch as *l, dh, bh*, and *r* belong to the same class of light consonants. So likewise *speur* and *fein* rhyme together, because *eu* and *ei* belong to the same class of vowels, and *r* and *n* to the same class of consonants. For similar reasons, *donn* and *shoill* form a rhyme, as also *chul* and *lur*, *ann* and *mall*, *threin* and *deigh*,

&c. Mr. Davies also notices several instances of faulty rhymes, which he attributes to various causes ; and amongst them the change or transposition of words or lines by illiterate reciters or superficial critics, without regard to the laws of the metre. He also very distinctly charges Macpherson with the mutilation of several stanzas, in his anxiety to suppress everything that might derogate from the majesty of Ossian, and also with the change of the Orthography, in order to obliterate the Irish mark, whenever it appeared too conspicuous. However, this latter influence could not have extended beyond the manuscripts in Macpherson's own handwriting or possession.

Thus it is proved, that there is a striking difference betwixt the construction of the Ossianic poetry, as seen in the Gaelic and Irish originals, and that given by Macpherson. In the former, it appears in rhyme and divided quatrain stanzas, each stanza being complete in itself. Whereas, in Macpherson's work, it is given as blank verse, not divided into quatrains, or any other stanzas of regular length, but into passages of various lengths, according to the subject, without regard to any system or order, or any acknowledged prosodical rules.

Besides this difference, it appears that there exists another no less important ; and that is a difference of style. The style of Macpherson's Ossian being heroic, sublime, and majestic, the Bard never, on any occasion, descending from the elevation which he has chosen for his flight ; whereas in the Gaelic and Irish the sublimity is often interrupted by a lower grade of poetic sentiment, and much of the composition may be said to be in the Ballad style ; a style, certainly, very different to the Ossianic, and scarcely compatible with it under any modification. As an instance, the following, from the alleged original of Darthula, may be adduced, (the death of the Children of Usnach, already noticed.)

“ Oh wood of Kone, oh wood of Kone !
Whither, alas ! Ainli would resort, &c.”

“ Vale of Urchay, oh vale of Urchay ! &c.”

Now it is remarked, that although Macpherson has given the story of Deirdri or Darthula, yet, he had not, in the

slightest degree, referred to these verses, and indeed, according to the manner in which they are given in this publication, they would appear most incongruous in his work, and completely destroy its character. Such a line as—

“Oh wood of Kone, Oh wood of Kone!”

or

“Glenorchy, Oh Glenorchy!”

beginning a rhyming stanza, and followed up for a whole page, establishes the ballad style in the most decided manner, and fixes a character, not only different to the Ossianic, but totally opposite.*

But, in order to show the various effects these verses can be made to produce, according to the interpretation they may receive, the following collation is added:—

FROM THE REPORT OF THE GAELIC SOCIETY OF DUBLIN, EDITED BY THEOPHILUS O'FANAGAN, 1808.

“A choill Chuan! ón a choill Chuan!
Gus ttigeadh Ainne, mo nuar;
Fá gairid liomsa ró bhí ann,
Is Naisi, in iarthar Alban.

Glenn Laidhe! ón in glenn Laidhe!
Do chodluinn fám erradh chaimh;
Iasc' as ois-fheoil is saill bruic,
Fá hí mo chuid in Glenn Laidhe.

Glenn Mhasan! ón glenn Mhasáin!
Ard a chenamh, gel a chasáin;
Do ghnidhmis codhladh corrach,
Os inbher mongach Mhasain.

Glenn Archain! ón glenn Archain!
Fa' hé an glenn dírech druimchain;
Noch ar bh'uallcha fer a aise,
No mo Naise an glenn Archain.

Glen Eitche! uch ón glenn Eitche!
Ann do thógbhas mo chéd-thigh;
Aluinn a fíodh iar n-eirghe
Buaile gréine glenn Eitche.

Glenn dá ruadh! ón glenn-dá ruadh!
Mo chion gach aen fhear dár dual;
As binn guith cuaiche ar chraibh chruim
Ar an mbinn ós glenn dá ruadh.†”

* As there are several copies of this tale, it is possible, that the one in which the verses are found was never seen by Macpherson, for had he chosen to exercise his powers of *Ossianising* upon them, as he is charged with doing with regard to others, he would have found no difficulty in modelling them after his own taste.

† The order of the stanzas is not the same in the two works.

THE ABOVE TRANSLATED BY MR. O'FANAGAN.

"Oh wood of Kone, oh wood of Kone !
Whither, alas ! Ainli would resort ;
Too short I deem my stay here,
With Naisi in the west of Alba.

Vale of Laith, oh in the vale of Laith !
I used to sleep under my soft coverlets ;
Fish and venison and the delicious prime of badger
Was my repast in the vale of Laith !

Vale of Masan, oh vale of Masan !
High its harts-tongue, fair its stalks ;
We enjoyed a rocking sleep
O'er the grassy harbour of Masan."

Vale of Urchay, oh vale of Urchay !
It was the straight vale of smooth ridge ;
A man of his age was not more sprightly
Than my Naisi in the vale of Urchay.

Vale of Eiti, alas ! oh vale of Eiti !
In it I raised my first house ;
Beauteous its wood ;—upon rising
Delightful resort of the sun is the vale of Eiti.

Vale of the two Roes, oh vale of the two Roes !
My love each man to whom it is inheritance [sic]
Sweet is the cuckoo's note on bending bough,
On the cliff over the vale of the two Roes."

FROM THE REPORT OF THE HIGHLAND SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND, 1805.

"Caill cuan gar tigeadh Ainnle mo nuar
Fagair lim ab bitan
Is Naise an oirear Alban.
Glend Laidh do chollain fan mboirmin caoimh
Iasg is sieng is saill bruich
Fa hi mo chuid an Glend laigh,
Glend masain ard a crimh geal a gasain
Do nimais colladh corrach
Os Inbhar mungach Masain.
Glend Eitichi ann do togbhus mo ched tigh
Alaind a fidh iar neirghe
Buaille grene Ghlind eitichi.
Mo chen Glend Urchaidh
Ba hedh in Glend direach dromchain
Uallcha feara aosl ma Naise
An Glend Urchaidh
Glend da ruadh
Mo chen gach fear da na dual
Is binn guth cuach
Ar craeib chruim
Ar in mbinn os Glenndaruadh."

THE FOREGOING TRANSLATED BY DR. DONALD SMITH.

"But, alas! the wood, the bay which Ainle would approach,
 Are left by me and Naos for ever
 Upon the coast of Albion.
 Oh vale of Laith! would I were sleeping by its soothing murmur!
 Fish and venison, and the choice of the chase prepared,
 Would be my repast in Glenlaith.
 Glenmasain! high grow its herbs, fair wave its branches,
 Steep would be the place of our repose
 Over the grassy banks of Masan.
 Oh vale of Etha! where a first house has been built for me,
 Delightful were its groves, when the sun, risen to his height,
 Would strike his beams on Gleneiti.
 How I long for the vale of Urchay!
 Straight vale of the fairest hills.
 Joyful were his companions around Naos
 In Glenurchay.
 Vale of Daruadh!
 Pleasant to me would be each of its people;
 Sweet is the note of the cuckoo
 From the bending tree of the mountain,
 Above Glen-da-Ruadh!"

But at this very point, we encounter a difficulty of the most perplexing description, and which must cause us to hesitate considerably before coming to any determination, as Dr. Donald Smith, in the Report of the Highland Society, gives a version of these very lines, which altogether changes their character, and this change is effected in a great measure, by the omission of the words repeated in the Irish copy, and by a slight difference of diction. For instance, instead of repeating the words "oh wood of Kone," &c. he gives them but once, and thus, though unintentionally, divides the passage into triplets, resembling the metre of Llywarch Hên, and which is not so distant from the Ossianic character as the Ballad style of the Irish version. Now here is a curious literary phenomenon. Here is a Poem, which, according to the interpretation it may chance to receive, may, without violating the acknowledged laws of translation, be made to assume the characteristics of three totally distinct styles: the Ossianic, the Ancient British, and the Ballad style.

As to its Ossianic capabilities, the translation of Dr. Smith shows, that with but a very trifling alteration of the diction, it may be made to speak the language of Macpherson as distinctly as Carric-thura, or Oina-Morul, and its not being found in Darthula, is probably to be attributed to the

state of the manuscript of that tale which fell into Macpherson's hands; as in some editions of that tale poetry is wanting, and the story itself also differently told.

As to the ancient British character of this work, it may be most distinctly perceived in Dr. Smith's edition of the foregoing verses, if they are only arranged in triplet stanzas, according to the subject of each. In Llywarch Hên's Heroic Elegies, for instance, we have numerous stanzas in the following style,—

“ Eryr Eli, gorelwi heno
Yng ngwaed gwir gwynofi
Ef yn nghoed trwm hoed i mi,

Eryr Eli a glywaf heno
Creulyd yw ni's beiddiaf
Ef yn nghoed trwm hoed arnaf.

Eryr Eli gorthrymed heno
Dyfrynt Meisir mygedawg
Dir Brochfael hir rhugodded.”

TRANSLATION OF THE ABOVE.

Eagle of Eli!—loud is thy cry this night.
In the blood of men thou dost rejoice—
He is in the wood : heavy is my affliction.

Eagle of Eli!—I hear him this night.
He is bloody—I will not dare him—
He is in the wood ; heavy is my grief.

Eagle of Eli ! let him oppress this night
The valley of Meisir, the celebrated
Land of Brochfael,—long has it been afflicted.

Such is the style of numerous passages in the works of Llywarch Hên. And now let us merely arrange Dr. Smith's text of the foregoing Gaelic lines, in triplets, according to the natural order of the sentences, and we shall have a composition precisely in the style of the ancient British Bard.

DR. SMITH'S TEXT.

“ Caill cuan gar tigeadh Ainnle mo nuar
Fagair lim ab bitan
Is Naise an oirear Alban.

Glend Laidh do chollain fan mboirmin caoimh
Iasg is sieng is saill bruich
Fa hi mo chuid an Glend laigh.

Glend masain ard a crimh geal a gasain
Do nimais colladh corrach
Os Inbhar mungach Masain.

Glend Eitchi ann do togbhus mo ched tigh
Alaínd a fídh iar neirghe
Buaile grene Glind eitchi."

"Wood of Kone!*

But alas! the wood, the bay which Ainle would approach,
Are left by me and Naos for ever,
Upon the coast of Alban.

Oh vale of Laith! would I were sleeping by its soothing murmur!
Fish and venison, and the choice of the chase prepared
Would be my repast in Glenlaith!

Glenmasain! high grow its herbs, fair wave its branches!
Steep would be the place of our repose,
Over the grassy banks of Masan.

Oh vale of Eiti! where a first house was built for me,
Delightful were its groves, when the sun, risen to its height,
Would strike his beams on Gleneiti!"

Now, even without any knowledge, either of the Gaelic, or ancient British, it is scarcely possible to compare these specimens together, without perceiving a striking resemblance in the structure of the stanzas, and when, by the aid of the translations, we acquire some idea of the meaning of the leading words, the resemblance is still more confirmed. And as Dr. Smith professes to follow an ancient manuscript, and, also, gives a facsimile of the manuscript, we are disposed to inquire, how such a vast difference can exist, as between Dr. Smith and Mr. O'Fanagan, in these lines. The answer is readily supplied by Mr. O'Fanagan, as far as his testimony may be of weight, who distinctly and without reserve, attributes it to the ignorance of Dr. Smith, and his want of acquaintance with the language of ancient compositions, and with the mode of writing in use amongst the transcribers of manuscripts, for, as he signifies, it was the custom of transcribers to be exceedingly economical of labour, and still more so of writing materials, and they never omitted an opportunity of introducing contractions; therefore, when such repetitions as *A 'chaill 'cuan*, *a chaill cuan*, and *Glenn Laidh on a Glenn Laidh* occurred, they thought it sufficient to give the word only once, well knowing that the metre would point out and require the repetition of such words, in order to complete the line. In remarking upon this statement, we

* Cuan, a bay. -

are certainly inclined to think, that if the rest of the Poem is in quatrains, and that such a repetition will make the lines in question perfect quatrains also, it is scarcely reasonable to step out of the usual order, and insist upon arranging these particular passages either into triplets or irregular lines: Llywarch Hên, and Macpherson to the contrary notwithstanding.

And now, this statement of Mr. O'Fanagan brings us to the style which he himself assigns to the Poem, and which, on examination, proves to be the real and genuine Ballad style, such as is to be found in almost every European language, from the middle ages down. The following commencement of an ancient Spanish ballad is of this description:—

“Rio verde, rio verde,
Quantos cuerpos en ti se bagna,
De Christianos y de moros,
Muertos por la dura spada, &c.”

which has been thus translated by Percy,—

“Gentle river, gentle river,
Lo, thy streams are stained with gore,
Many a brave and noble captain
Floats along thy willow'd shore, &c.”

and, also, by Dr. Johnson:—

“Glassy water, glassy water,
Down whose current clear and strong,
Chiefs confused in mutual slaughter,
Moor and Christian roll along.”

One other instance may suffice; it is the commencement of a Lament on the battle of Culloden, or Drum Mossie muir, as the place was called:—

“Drum Mossie day! Drum Mossie day!
A wae-fu! day thou wast to me;
For then I lost a father dear,
A father dear and brothers three.”

Whether these remarks may be thought to throw any light upon the subject under consideration, or not, they may at least be of some service in defining the object of inquiry, and that is, the comparative merit of the Gaelic remains of poetry, as regards the amount and order of poetical genius which they evince. After this review, the following observations offer themselves to our notice.

If the style of the Irish and Gaelic Poems is that of the Ballad, they possess no merit, but what is common to all Europe; and in point of excellence, they are at least equalled if not greatly exceeded by the Spanish ballads.

If the style is that of the ancient British remains, they at any rate do only partake of that which is equally the property of another branch of the same race, the degree of excellence to be yet the subject of discussion.

But, if the style is that of Macpherson's Ossian, they undoubtedly stand forth pre-eminent amidst the literature of the world. The genius which called them to existence was a creative genius; other Poets have pleased, and even captivated, but their genius was but imitative. They only carried out more extensively the development of feelings which already existed, but Macpherson called up new feelings, which, till then, the mind was not conscious of a capability to experience.

In this view of the subject, the question is not, whether the author of these Poems lived in the third century, or in the sixth, or ninth, or in the twelfth, nor is the question so much whether the Poems are in rhyme, or even whether the words are always literally rendered; but the question is, the transfusion of sentiment; Did Macpherson really transfuse into his work, the spirit and feeling of the original? not so much Is he a literal translator, as Is he a faithful interpreter?

In whatever way this question may be decided, it must be acknowledged, that the Ossianic originals, as given by the Highland Society, in whatever manner they may be rendered, whether literally, or otherwise, do often possess such very striking marks of genius, that we cannot refuse to assign them a poetical merit of the highest order. The following examples, may suffice to establish this position.

ORIGINAL OF OSSIAN'S ADDRESS TO THE SUN, IN CARTHON.

O ! 'Usa fhein a shiubhlas shuas
 Gruinn mar lan sciath chruaidh nan triath,
 C'as tha do dhearsa gu'n ghruaim,
 Do sholus ata buan, a Ghrian?
 Thig thu 'na d'aileadh thrèin,
 Is faluichidh Rèil en triall,

Theid Gealach gun tuar o'n speur
 'G a cleath fein fo stuaigh san Iar,
 Tha 'Us' ann a d'astar amhain,
 Co thu dana bhi na d choir?
 Tuitidh darag o'n chruaich aird,
 Tuitidh earn fo avis a's scorr;
 Tràighidh a's lionaidh an Cuan,
 Caillear shuas an Rè san speur;
 Thusa d'aon a chaoi fo bhuaidh
 An aobhneas do sholuis fein.
 'Nuair a dhubhas m'an domhan stoirm,
 Le Torrunn borb, a's dealan bearth, &c."

LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THE FOREGOING FROM THE HIGHLAND SOCIETY'S REPORT.

"Oh thou who travellest above,
 Round as the full-orbed shield of the mighty!
 Whence is thy brightness without frown,
 Thy light that is lasting oh Sun?
 Thou comest forth in thy powerful beauty,
 And the stars hide their course;
 The moon, without strength, goeth from the sky,
 Hiding herself under a wave in the west.
 Thou art in thy journey alone;
 Who is so bold as to come nigh thee?
 The oak falleth from the high mountain,
 The rock and the precipice fall under old age,
 The ocean ebbeth and floweth,
 The moon is lost in the sky;
 But thou alone art for ever in victory,
 In the rejoicing of thy own light.
 When the storm darkeneth around the world,
 With fierce thunder and piercing lightnings,
 Thou lookest in thy beauty from thy noise,
 Smiling in the troubled sky!—
 To me is thy light in vain,
 As I can never see thy countenance;
 Though thy yellow golden locks are spread
 On the face of the clouds in the East;
 Or when thou tremblest in the West,
 At thy dusky doors in the ocean.—
 Perhaps thou and myself are
 At one time mighty, at another feeble,
 Our years sliding down the skies,
 Quickly travelling together to their end.
 Rejoice then oh Sun!
 While thou art strong, oh king in thy youth:
 Dark and unpleasant is old age,
 Like the vain and feeble light of the moon,
 While she looks through a cloud on the field,
 And her grey mist on the sides of the rocks;
 A blast from the north on the plain,
 A traveller in distress, and he slow."

MACPHERSON'S TRANSLATION .

"Oh thou that rollest above,
 Round as the shield of my fathers!

Whence are thy beams, oh Sun,
 Thy everlasting light ?
 Thou comest forth in thy awful beauty ;
 the stars hide themselves in the sky ;
 the moon, cold and pale,
 sinks in the western wave ;
 but thou thyself movest alone.
 Who can be a companion of thy course ?
 The oaks of the mountains fall ;
 the mountains themselves decay with years ;
 the ocean shrinks and grows again ;
 the moon herself is lost in heaven ;
 but thou art for ever the same,
 rejoicing in the brightness of thy course.
 When the world is dark with tempests,
 when thunder rolls and lightning flies,
 thou lookest in thy beauty from the clouds,
 and laughest at the storm.
 But to Ossian thou lookest in vain ;
 for he beholds thy beams no more ;
 whether thy yellow hair
 flows on the eastern clouds,
 or thou tremblest at the gates of the west
 But thou art perhaps, like me, for a season ;
 thy years will have an end.
 Thou shalt sleep in thy clouds,
 careless of the voice of the morning.
 Exult then, oh Sun,
 in the strength of thy youth !
 Age is dark and unlovely ;
 it is like the glimmering light of the moon,
 when it shines through broken clouds,
 and the mist is on the hills ;
 the blast of the north is on the plain ;
 the traveller shrinks in the midst of his journey."

There are so many passages, in Macpherson's translation, literally rendered, that we can only say, that had he chosen to be more literal in the rest, he might have been so, without departing from the style of his version, so that thus far, the argument remains in its original state.

In the following extracts from *Ossian's Address to the Sun*, in *Carriethura*, the original and the translations are given, for the convenience of comparison :—

GAELIC ORIGINAL.

An d' fhàg thu gorm-astar nan speur,
 A mhic gun bheud a's òr-bhui ciabh ?
 Tha dorsa na h-oidhche dhuit rèidh,
 Agus pàilliu do chlos san iar.
 Thig na stuaidh mu'n cuairt gu mall,
 A choimhead fir a's gloine gruaidh ;

A' togail fo eagal an ceann :
 Ri d' fhaicinn cho àillidh 'na d'shuain,
 Theich iadsa gun tuar o d' thaobh.
 Gabhsa cadal ann do chòs,
 A Ghrian ! is till o d'chlos le h-auibhneas.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

"Hast thou left the blue journey of the skies,
 Oh thou son without fault, of yellow golden locks?
 To thee are the doors of the night,
 And the tabernacle of thy rest in the west.
 The waves come slowly around,
 To view the one of the brightest face,
 Lifting with fear their heads;
 When they behold thy beauty while asleep,
 They fly without strength from thy side.
 Take thou thy rest
 Oh Sun ! and return again with joy."

MACPHERSON'S TRANSLATION.

"Hast thou left thy blue course in heaven,
 golden haired son of the sky !
 The west has opened its gates ;
 the bed of thy repose is there.
 The waves come to behold thy beauty.
 They lift up their trembling heads.
 They see thee lovely in thy sleep ;
 they shrink away with fear.
 Rest, in thy shadowy cave,
 Oh Sun ! Let thy return be in joy."

Here again is a resemblance so close as to refute the charge of forgery, provided the genuineness of the Gaelic is proved; and the question still remains one of fidelity of interpretation. It is evident, from a slight examination, that Macpherson has not always translated literally, and also, that he has taken many liberties in omitting passages, as well as in adding others, and altering the meaning of some, nevertheless the former question continues unsettled, and that is, Whether the original Gaelic is capable of exciting the Ossianic feeling in the same way with Macpherson's translation ; or, to put the matter in a clearer point of view, Whether the ancient composer of the Poems, attributed to Ossian, was himself conscious of the sentiment awakened by Macpherson's work: Whether any Highlander, ever felt the influence of such a sentiment, previous to the appearance of Macpherson's work: and whether, even now, the Gaelic alone is capable of giving rise to that sentiment.

Perhaps, one of the oldest compositions, in the Gaelic language, is that respecting the *Liaith fail*, or Stone of destiny, which is now under the coronation chair in Westminster Abbey.

“Cioniodh seuit saor an fine
Man ba breag an Faisdine
Mar a bh' fhuighid an lia-fail
Dlighid flaitheas do ghabhail.”

TRANSLATED THUS BY HECTOR BOETHIUS.

“Ni fallit fatum, Scoti quocunque locatum
Inveniunt lapidem, regnare tenentur ibidem.”

As this stone is said to have been brought into Scotland from Ireland at a very early period, it certainly may be urged that the distich is not of Albanian but Hibernian origin; upon this point, we can only appeal to probability, and the only statement we can with confidence make is, that the lines must be older than A. D. 1300, as in that year the stone was brought to London by Edward I. from the ancient palace of Scone, where it had been placed by Kenneth II. about the year 842.

Next in point of antiquity to this composition, or perhaps anterior, may be placed the quatrain respecting the destiny of Iona,—

“Seachd bliadhna roimh 'n bràth,
Thig muir thair Eirinn re on tràth,
Is thair Ila ghuirm ghlais;
Ach snamhaidh I Cholum clàraich.”

“Seven years before the world's end
The sea shall come over Erin at one tide,
And over green grassy Islay;
But I Colum shall float upon the flood.”

The following prophecy respecting Iona, which is attributed to St. Columba, may be old.

An I mo chridhe, I mo ghraidh,
An àite guth mànaich bitludh geum ba
Ach mun tig an saoghal gu crìch
Bithidh I mar a bha.”

“In the isle of my heart, the isle of my love,
Instead of a monk's voice there shall be the lowing of cattle;
But ere the world comes to an end,
Iona shall flourish as before.”

From the uncertainty that rests upon these, and similar traditional fragments, as regards their date and origin; and from the circumstance of the Irish claiming all the manuscripts in which the ancient Poems are found which are attributed to Ossian, it has been asserted, that the Highlanders have not, and never had in their native tongue, any compositions whatever, beyond what they might have received from Ireland. Now the unreasonableness of such an assertion, and the improbability of the fact, might be sufficient to refute it without further argument, as it is not likely that a nation so much under the influence of poetry and imagination, should continue for centuries to receive compositions from another country, without at least attempting their imitation, if not also the construction of something original. But in the deciding of this point, we are not left to a balance of probabilities, for there is extant a Poem in the Gaelic language of Scotland, as early as the time of Malcolm III. i. e. from A.D. 1056 to 1093, which is believed to have been written by the Highland Court-bard of that sovereign, and, according to Pinkerton, "has no marks of having been written in Ireland." It is a metrical chronicle of the ancient Scottish kings. It contains 112 lines. The following specimens of it are given from Pinkerton's work, together with the translation:—

DUAN ALBANACH.

"A eolcha Alban uile,
A shluagh feta foltbhuidle;
Cia ceud ghabhail an eol duibh,
Ro ghabhsadar Alban bhruigh.

Albanus ro ghabh lia shlogh,
MacseIn oirdhearc Islacon,
Brathair do Bhritus gan bhrath
O raitear Alba eathrach.
Ro ionnarb a bhrathair bras,
Britus tar mhuir Nicht namhnus
Ro ghabh Britus Albain ain
Go rinn fiadhnach Fothudain.
Foda iar mBritus mblait mbil,
Ro ghabhsad clanna Nemhidh;
Erglan iar dteacht as a luing,
Do aithle toghla tuir conaing.

Cruithnigh ro ghabhsad iardain,
Iar driachtain a hEreann mhuigh.
Dech righ, tri fichid righ ran,
Ghabhsad diobhan Cruithean chlar, &c."

FREE TRANSLATION OF THE FOREGOING BY MR. O'CONNOR.

“Ye knowing men of Alba, ye comely hosts of the yellow tresses,
know ye the first possessions of that country?”

“Albanus of the numerous combatants was the first possessor. He
was the son of Isiacon. From him is derived the name of Alba. Britus
was his brother. Britus banished his brother across the Ictian sea.
Britus seized upon Alba to the limits of the hunter of Fothadan.

“Long after the celebrated Britus the Nemedians settled here under
auspices of Erglan. It was after the siege of Tor Conang.

“In a later period Cruithnidh [the Picts] seized upon Alba, after
quitting Ireland. Seventy of their monarchs reigned over Cruithen-
land.”

Towards the conclusion are the following words, which
clearly prove the era of the Poem:—

“Maholum, a nosa as righ,
Mac Donnchaidh datha drechbni, &c.”

“Malcolm son of Donchod is the present king, God alone knows
how long he is to reign.”

BAS FHRAOICH.

THE DEATH OF FRAOCH.

The Gaels, also, lay claim to the Poem called the Death of
Fraoch, a composition in the same quatrain metre, and in
the Ballad style. It consists of thirty-three stanzas, and
appears as old as the Poems attributed to Ossian. The sub-
ject is the death of Fraoch, which was accomplished through
the malice of his mother-in-law, who was named Mey. There
was in an island in a neighbouring lake, since called Loch
Meyr, a mountain ash, whose fruit had extraordinary medi-
cinal powers; but at the foot of the tree there was a vene-
mous monster, which made the approach to it extremely
perilous. Mey, to gratify her malice, feigned herself ill, and
requested Fraoch to provide her some of this fruit. He ac-
cordingly swam the lake, and finding the monster asleep, he
brought away some of the fruit uninjured. Then Mey said
that the fruit was not sufficient, that nothing would cure her
but a branch torn off from the tree. Fraoch again swam
the lake, and tore away a branch from the tree, but as he
was returning, the monster awoke, and pursued him into the
lake, and destroyed him; the following is the commencement
of the Poem:—

“Osan caraíd ann cluain Fhraoich,
Osan Laoich ann caiseal chro,

An Osan sìn on tuirseach fear,
'Son tromghulanach Bean òg.

Sud e shìar an càrn am bheil,
Fraoch Mac Fedhich an Fhuilte maoidh,
Am fear a rinn Buidheachas do Mhei,
Sann air a shloinne Càrn Fhraoich, &c."

The sigh of a friend in the grove of Fraoch !
A sigh for the hero of its rounded pale,
A sigh which causes each man to mourn,
And which makes each maiden weep.

There to the westward is the Càrn,
Which covers Fraoch, son of Fiach of the soft hair,
He, who obeyed the call of Mey,
And from whom that càrn of Fraoch has its name, &c.

It is not known that there are in the Gaelic language,
any prose compositions of a date anterior to the eleventh
century.

WELSH LITERATURE

OF THE

Third Period.

FROM THE ELEVENTH TO THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

POETRY.

It has already been noticed how, in the sixth century, the genius of Bardism blazed forth amongst the Welsh, and continued in its full brilliancy for upwards of a century, and, probably, could we recover the compositions of the time, it would be found that it did not entirely subside for nearly two centuries. But it cannot be denied that some time towards the close of the seventh century, the real *awen* and spirit of poetry had nearly disappeared; and from that time to the close of the eleventh century, or rather the beginning of the twelfth, there is but very little extant that deserves to be ranked amongst the spirited productions of Aneurin, &c. in the sixth century. But at this epoch, i. e. the beginning of the twelfth century, we find the *awen* bursting forth again with the same energy as before, and, for another period of two centuries, evincing the same power and vitality as at the former outbreak.

We are naturally led to inquire respecting the causes of such desultory manifestations of genius, and to ask what could have occasioned these extraordinary impulses at these particular periods, and the general torpor which immediately succeeded to each of them. But we are constrained to admit, that the answers which suggest themselves, are any thing but satisfactory.

In the first place, it may be said, that these revivals of the *awenic genius** took place at two periods of similar

* *Awen*, in Welsh, signifies Poetic inspiration. Mr. Price has here coined a new English adjective, well suited to enrich the language by its fulness of expressive meaning.—EDITOR.

national excitement, the first at the Saxon invasion, and the last at the Norman. It must be acknowledged that these circumstances added force to the existing impulse, but there are certain facts which militate against the idea of their constituting the original cause. For instance, the national struggles of the Welsh against the Saxons did not terminate with the subsiding of the Bardic genius in the seventh century, but on the contrary, there were continual wars for some ages afterwards, as with Offa and Ethelbald, &c. of which there is no poetic memorial extant. Again, in the eighth and ninth centuries, the Welsh had to maintain a most arduous, and, ultimately victorious struggle against the Danes; and yet, we do not find that the Bardic spirit was roused from its torpor upon this occasion. Perhaps there never was a time that called for greater exertion of energy, or afforded cause for greater exultation in its results. For those ferocious barbarians, who had conquered England and Ireland, and possessed themselves of a considerable portion of Scotland, yet, were never able to obtain a footing in Wales, nor even to effect a landing, excepting in marauding parties, along the coast. And when once, with the whole power of the Danish army, they made an irruption into Wales, they were so vigorously attacked by the Welsh, that they were defeated with immense loss, and compelled to retreat with precipitancy across the Severn: and yet there was no demonstration of a corresponding excitement amongst the Bards.

Again, at the period of the Norman invasion of Wales, although, in all probability, the spirit of Bardism received an additional stimulus from the stirring events of the time, yet, there are certain facts, which seem to indicate, that the awakening of that spirit is not attributable to the Norman invasion, but, on the contrary, that it had already taken place before that invasion occurred. It does not appear that the collision between the Welsh and the Normans had become general prior to the year 1091, when Robert Fitzhamon invaded Glamorgan; but we have reason to believe that the Bardic *awen* exhibited symptoms of an awakening full ten years before, and the subject which exercised the talents of the only Bard of the time, whose works are extant,

was the battle of Carno, fought in 1080, betwixt two native princes, Gruffydd ap Cynan, and Trahaearn ap Caradawc, in which the latter was slain. The composition alluded to is a short Ode, by *Meilyr Brydydd*, or Meilyr the Poet; which in the Myfyrian Archæology, is placed in the twelfth century, but from internal evidence it is clear that it was composed soon after the battle, in which it appears that the Bard himself was present; as it is said that he sang the Ode in that very expedition. It is stated in the Welsh Chronicle, that Gruffydd ap Cynan, having been obliged to take refuge in Ireland, returned from that country with a strong body of Irish Scots, and having joined forces with Rhys ap Tewdwr, attacked Trahaearn and slew him. The Ode is as follows:—

“Meilyr Brydydd a gant yr Awdyl hon yn y lluydd y llas Trahaearn fab Caradawg, a Meilyr mab Rhiwallawn fab Cynfyn.

Gwolychaf ym Ren rex awyr
 Arglwydd a wyr fy'm pryder
 Pryder pryderaf yn fawr
 Am fy Arglwydd llawr llyw nifer
 Ny ddodynt dros for etwaith
 Pobyl anhyfaeth Nanhyfer
 Gwyddyl diefyl duon
 Ysgodogion dynion lletffer
 Cad a fydd ym mynydd Carn
 A Trahaearn a ladder
 A mab Rhiwallawn rwyf myr
 O'r gyfergyr nid adfer
 Difieu ym mhen y tair wythnos
 Tu a nos yd ith ladder.”

“Meilyr the Poet sung this Ode, in the expedition in which were slain Trahaearn the son of Caradawc, and Meilyr son of Rhiwallawn son of Cynfyn.

“I adore my Sovereign, the king of heaven; the Lord, who knows my affliction. I am greatly afflicted for my earthly lord, the ruler of the host. Should there come again over the sea, the ungentle people of Nanhyfer, the Irish—black devils, the Scots, a savage race; a battle will take place on the mountain of Carn, and Trahaiarn will be slain; and the son of Rhiwallawn, the protecting chief, will not return from the encounter. On Thursday, at the end of the three weeks, towards night thou shalt be slain.”

There is, in the style and construction of this Poem, a certain simplicity, which indicates an unpractised composer. This want of skill may be attributed in some measure to the youth of the Poet. For, as he composed an Elegy on Gruffydd ap Cynan, who died in 1137, he must have been

but a youthful Bard in 1080. But it is more probable that the simplicity of style observable in the foregoing Ode, is attributable to the fact already alluded to, that is, the long period of Bardic torpor which had preceded its composition; as it appears that Meilyr is actually the first composer of the Bardic school, which arose with the renovation of the *awen* at the close of the eleventh century. After a lapse of fifty years, we find that Meilyr's own style has been greatly improved, though there is still much left of his early character of simplicity. For, in his Elegy on Gruffydd ap Cynan, there is the same detail of occurrences, a feature not so conspicuous in the works of subsequent Bards, and, also, the same bare and unadorned statements of facts, and less of the intricacy of alliteration, and artificial arrangement of sentences.

But whether times of national emergency are calculated to call forth the energies of the muse, or whether they only add to the excitement already existing, we must acknowledge, to the honour of the Welsh Bards, that their *awen* was of a character highly patriotic, that from whatever source the inspiration of these men was derived, their sympathies were universally enlisted on the side of their country. The heroes they celebrated were the warriors who really defended their native soil, and the events they recorded, were the battles actually fought in the cause of national liberty. And here we cannot but notice a striking contrast between the direction of the ancient British *awen* in the middle ages, and that which the modern muse of Britain has taken in our own time. For whilst, during the long and desperate struggle of the last war, the utmost efforts of the nation were exerted against a powerful and inveterate enemy, and its best blood unsparingly shed on sea and land: with the exception of Campbell's Battle of the Baltic,* not a single Ode was offered in tribute by any of the leading Poets of the day, but the brightest genius of the country lavished its powers upon the villanies of Moss-troopers and Corsairs, and other worthless characters of the same stamp. It is true, we find one individual who evinced a more patriotic spirit, and that was Dibdin; one, who though

* And the "Hohenlinden" of the same Poet.—EDITOR.

not of the highest order of genius, yet, perhaps, was equally effective in his compositions with the most distinguished men of the age and who deserved well of his country, for the unflagging manner in which he brought out his inspiring sea songs. But then, even Dibdin was influenced by the same feeling of idealism, and all his heroes are imaginary beings, *Tom Tough, Jack Junk, Ben Block, &c.*

In thus attempting to follow the track of the *awen*, from the sixth century downwards, if we are not able to account for the irregularity of its course, yet, we do at least light upon facts, which seem to indicate similar periods of action and of inactivity in the rest of the world, and which, as they seem to be generally concurrent and contemporaneous, we may, perhaps, be held excusable, if we indulge in an idea, that they indicate the occurrence of a periodical mental excitement; a kind of sleep and waking of the human mind, though the period of rest has generally exceeded in its duration that of the waking state. For instance, in order to illustrate this position, we may take a look at the world after the Roman Empire had reached its height, and the Augustan age passed away; we find but few works of genius for some centuries. The Roman Colonies seem to have lapsed into a complete torpor; and the Bardic *awen* of the Britons appears to have shared in the same inactivity; but in the fifth and sixth centuries, from causes not yet fully explained, we find the whole western world in commotion. To what extent the intellectual frame was influenced amongst those nations, who, from their ignorance of letters, were unable to record the workings of the mind, we have no means of judging; but amongst the Britons, we find that the national excitement was followed, if not accompanied, by a corresponding intellectual movement, and in the sixth century arose a constellation of Bards, whose inspiration appears as unaccountable as does the general outbreak of the barbarian nations around.

In the course of two or three generations, the spirit of the *awen* flags, and continues in a state of inactivity, until the end of the eleventh century, and, during this period, the fever of the nations around appears to have subsided, and the world had lapsed into a state of comparative tranquility.

But now, at the close of the eleventh century, as if refreshed by a sleep of 400 years, the Bardic *awen* is again awake, and immediately in high action; and this with as little apparent cause as its previous sinking to rest. But it is not merely in the *awen* of Wales, that this awakening is perceptible, we find it throughout the whole of the western world; a new impulse seems to be communicated to the mind, and all things bear testimony to the effects of its renovated energies. New languages are formed, and new books written, and new structures erected; turreted and embattled castles take the place of earthen forts, and groined and vaulted cathedrals occupy the sites of wattled and mud-walled fabrics; chivalric honours are created, and crusades undertaken. In short, the whole aspect of society is altered, and as great a difference is seen betwixt the twelfth and the tenth centuries, as betwixt the waking and sleeping man.

But in no country were the effects of this awakening more visible than amongst the Welsh; for with their copious and expressive language ready formed, and their ancient traditions handed down uninterruptedly, their Bards produced compositions, which, for the lyric spirit, have not been surpassed, nor perhaps equalled, in any language since the days of Pindar.

Amongst these Bards, the first that offers himself to our notice is Gwalchmai son of Meilyr, the last mentioned Bard, who appears to have inherited his father's poetical talents to their fullest extent; he also displays a higher degree of taste, and adopts a more cultivated style. The following Ode may suffice as a specimen of his power. It was composed in 1157, in honour of the victory obtained by Owen Gwynedd, Prince of North Wales, over the troops of Henry the Second on the shores of Menai:—

GWALCHMAI AI CANT I OWAIN GWYNEDD.

“Ardwyreaf hael o hil Rodri
Ardwyad gorwlad gwerlin teithi
Teithiawg Prydain
Twyth afyrdwyth Owain
Teyrnain ni grain
Ni grawn rei.

Teir lleng y daethant liant lestri
Teir praf prif lynges wy bres brofi

Un o Iwerddon
Arall arfogion
O'r Llychlynigion
Llwrw hirion lli.

A'r drydedd dros for o Normandi
Ar drapherth anferth anfad iddi
A draig Mon mor ddrud ei eissillydd yn aer
A ba terfysg taer
I hir holi

A rhagddaw rhewys dwys dyfysgi
A rhewin a thrin a thranc Cymri
A'r gad gad greudde
A'r gryd gryd graendde
Ac am dal Moelfre
Mil fanieri.

A'r lladd ladd llachar ar bar beri
A ffwyr ffwyr ffyrfgawdd ar fawdd foddi
A Menai heb drai o drallanw gwaedryar
A lliw gwyar
Gwyr yn heli.

A llyrygawr glas a gloes trychni
A thrychion yn dud rhag rheiddudd ri
A dygyfor Lloegr a dygyfrang a hi
Ac ei dygyfwrw yn astrusi
A dygyfod clod cleddyf difri
Yn seith ugein ieith wy feith foli."

It is scarcely just to attempt to render even the meaning of such a composition in any literal translation, and yet it is necessary towards the illustration of the subject that a translation should be added; the following therefore is offered, as furnishing the meaning of the original, as nearly as the idioms of the two languages will permit. It is partly taken from the translation of the Rev. Evan Evans:—

"I will extol the generous hero of the race of Rhodri, the bulwark of his country, exalted chieftain, the glory of Britain, Owen brave and warlike, a prince who will not stoop, nor hoard up riches.

"Three legions arrived in the vessels of the ocean; Three mighty fleets, furious to attack,—One from Ireland; another with well-armed men of Llychlyn; lengthy burdens of the deep.

"And the third came over the sea from Normandi, with prodigious labour, but with ill success—

"The chief of Mona, how dauntless were his sons in the battle! There was the furious tumult, and the long enduring contest, and before the prince himself there was vast confusion, havoc, conflict, honourable death, bloody battle, horrible consternation, and upon Tâl Moelfre a thousand banners.

"There was outrageous carnage, and the rage of spears, and hasty signs of violent indignation and overwhelming in the flood, and the Menai without ebb of tide from the flowing of blood, and the ocean tinged with crimson.

"There were glittering cuirasses, and the agony of gashing wounds, and the mangled warriors prostrate before the crimson-lance chief. And Lloegria was put to rout and confusion. And the renown of the sword of the exalted prince shall be celebrated. In seven score languages shall it be extolled."*

This Ode of Gwalchmai was selected by Gray as a specimen of Welsh Poetry; and his metrical translation, from Evans's prose, may be seen in the poem entitled the *Triumphs of Owen*. It is to this composition, that bishop Percy refers, when he speaks of "Gwalchmai's very sublime and animated Ode." And it is of the Bards of the same period that he speaks, in his correspondence with Evans, when he pays so high a compliment to their genius. "I have," says he, "lately been collecting specimens of English poetry, through every age, from the time of the Saxons down to that of Elizabeth, and I am ashamed to show you what wretched stuff our rhymers produced, at the same time that your bards were celebrating the praise of Llywelyn with a spirit scarce inferior to Pindar."

There are several other compositions of Gwalchmai extant, in which the same spirit and genius is evinced; from several of them it appears, that the Bard himself had been actively engaged in some of the battles which he refers to, as for instance:—

"Llochar fy nghleddyf lluch ei anwyd
Yn nghad llewychedig aur ar fy ysgwyd."

"Bright is my sword;—gleaming in battle,
Glittering and bright is the gold on my buckler."

and also,—

"Gwalchmai a'm gelwir gelyn y Saeson."

"Gwalchmai am I called, the foe of the Saxons."

and again,—

"Bloody is my sword, crimson in battle,
In conflict with Lloegr was not the ground covered? [with blood]
I saw, from the stroke of the son of Gruffydd,
The routed armies, &c."

* Perhaps the Bard may have had in his mind, the various nations of which the invading army was composed.

and also,—

“Gwelais yn Rhuddlan ruthyr-fflam rhag
Owain a chelanedd rhain a rhudd fehyr.”

“I saw in Rhuddlan the rushing of fire before
Owain, and prostrate carcases and crimson lances.”

He also enumerates several other battles in which he was engaged, as the battle of Cardigan, the battle of Maesgar-nedd, of Graig Gwydyr, &c. and he says, that he heard the eagle screaming over his prey, when blood was added to his repast :—

“Endeweisi eryr ar ei giniaw dyfyn
Dyraith Gwynedd gwyar iddaw ;”

and he speaks of his having been engaged in guarding the frontiers, and keeping watch at night on the fords of the waters of the Breiddyn mountains.

But in the midst of all these martial recollections, the Bard occasionally recurs to scenes and objects of a more gentle character, as,—

“The sea mews sporting on their bed of floods,
Their plumage gliding through the parted waves ;”

“Gwylain yn gware ar wely lliant
Lleithrion eu pluawr pleidiau edrin ;”

and of his being—

“Soothed to sleep by the green wave of Aberffraw.”

“Dymhunis ton wyrdd wrth Aberffraw.”

He also speaks of his listening to the notes of the nightingale, and alludes to several other subjects of a similar nature, by which it appears that he was not insensible to their influence ; but, at the same time, these allusions are but very cursory, and it is evident, that the bent of his mind was almost entirely martial, and in accordance with the stirring spirit of the time.

But Gwalchmai is not the only Bard of eminence at this period ; there are several others, who are at least his rivals ; as for instance, Cynddelw, Owain Cefeilioc, and Llywarch ap Llywelyn, but a particular notice of their respective works, would extend the present Essay far beyond its proper limits, as the compositions of Cynddelw alone amount to

near fifty. It must suffice, as evidence of the estimation in which their genius is held, that they are placed in the same group with Gwalchmai; nevertheless there is in one of the Poems of Owen Cefeilioc, that of the Hirlas, a passage so exceedingly striking and original, so dramatic and effective, that it is scarcely possible to pass it by unnoticed. The real sense of this passage appears to have been first discovered by Sharon Turner, and it is singular, that none of his predecessors as translators or commentators had ever suspected its existence. However, now it is pointed out, nothing can be more clear, and we are surprised that it should have escaped the notice of Evans, and other admirers of the Poem. The following extract from Sharon Turner's exposition of the passage, in his "Vindication of the Genuineness of the Ancient British Poems," is here given. It may be necessary to premise, that Owen Cefeilioc was prince of Powis in the middle of the twelfth century. He was a brave and warlike chieftain, and was one of the allied princes, who defeated Henry the Second in the battle of Grogen, A. D. 1165, and, it is supposed that he composed his Poem of the Hirlas soon after that event.

Sharon Turner, says,—

"Before I dismiss the prince of Cyveilioc, I cannot but crave permission to mention a very interesting and original elegiac turn which occurs in his poem of the Hirlas.

"The prince was a turbulent warrior, generally fighting with some of his neighbours. His Hirlas, however, shows that he possessed a strong poetic genius, and applied it to celebrate the warriors who accompanied him in his quarrels. The plan of the poem is ingenious and picturesque. He fancies himself surrounded by his chiefs at the festive table, rejoicing in their victory. And he orders his cupbearer to pour out the generous beverage to those whom he intends to celebrate, and whom he selects and describes successively."

He thus sends the horn to Rhys, and again, he orders it to be replenished and taken to Gwgan, and then to Gruffydd, and then to Ednyfed, preparing the presentation to each with a complimentary address, descriptive of his valour and achievements.

"Two of his accustomed companions and favourite warriors were Moreiddig and Tudyr, who had just perished in a preceding battle. In the ardour of his festivity and panegyric, he forgets they are no more. Therefore, after directing the horn of mead to be sent to his warriors, and after addressing each of them with appropriate praise, he proceeds

to send it to Moreiddig and Tudyr. He recites their merit,—He turns to greet them,—but their place is vacant,—he beholds them not,—he hears their dying groan,—he recollects their fate,—his triumphant strains cease,—his hilarity flies, and the broken tones of mournful exclamation suddenly burst out.

“ To enhance the compliment, which he is going to pay, he threatens death to his cupbearer, if he execute his office unskilfully.

“ Fill cupbearer, seek not death—
Fill the horn of honour at our banquets,
The long blue horn, of high privilege, of ancient silver,
That covers it not unsparingly ;
Bear to Tudyr, eagle of slaughter,
A prime beverage of florid wine.
Thy head shall be the forfeit if there come not in
The most delicious mead,
To the hand of Moreiddig, encourager of songs ;
May thy become old in fame before they leave us !
Ye blameless brothers of aspiring souls,
Of dauntless ardour that would grasp even fire ;
Heroes, what services have ye achieved for me !
Not old disgustingly, but old in skill ;
Unwearied, rushing wolves of battle ;
First in the crimsoned ranks of bleeding spears,
Brave leaders of the Mochnantians from Powys,
The prompt ones in every need,
Who rescue their borders from violence.
Praise is your meed, most amiable pair !
Ha !—the cry of death—and do I miss them—
O Christ !—how I mourn their catastrophe—
O lost Moreiddig—how greatly shall I need thee.” *

* “ Diwallaw di fenestr na fyn angau,
Corn can anrhydedd anghyfeddau,
Hirlas buelin, breint uchel hen ariant,
Ai gortho, nid gorthenau ;
A dyddwg i Dudyr eryr aerau,
Gwirawd gysefin o'r gwin gwinau
Oni ddaw i mewn o'r medd gorau oll,
Gwirawd o ban, dy ben faddau,
Ar llaw Foreiddig, llodriad cerddau,
Cerddyn hyn i glod cyn oer adnau ;
Dieithr frodyr fryd ucheldau,
Diarchar arial o dan dalau
Cedwyr a'm gorug gwasanaethau,
Nid ym hyn dihyll nam hen deheu,
Cynneifeid, gyrtheid, fleinieid, fleiddiau,
Cynfaran creulawn creulyd ferau.
Glew glyw Mochnantwys o Bowys beu :
O glew gwnedd arnaddunt deu,
Achubieit pob rheid, rhudd eu harfau :
Echedwynt rhag terfysg eu terfynau,
Moliant yw rhan y rhai gwinnau ;—
Marwnad fu !—neud mi newid y ddau !—
O chan Grist ! mor drist wyf o'r anaelau
O goll Moreiddig !—mawr ei eisiau.”

Amongst the less distinguished Bards of this age, there are some whose compositions contain occasional passages of considerable merit, and sometimes we meet with a complete Poem equally original and spirited. The following stanzas from an Ode by Llywarch Llew Cád to Llywe'lyn, son of Madawc, Prince of Powys, who was slain in 1159, are curious, as combining with a highly poetical style and regularity of verse, a certain quaintness of manner, which gives to the piece a peculiar degree of interest. The Bard introduces his hero as a warrior, fully armed and mounted on his war-horse, and proceeds to describe him in a series of questions and answers. The Poem opens as follows :—

“Gofynnwys nebun, ny bu raen gan rei
 Cyn rudaw haearngaen
 Pa was a wisg e laesgaen
 Pa walch yw y balch o'r blaen
 Lleissiawn werennic o ranned dyall
 Nid arall ae harwed
 Llyw glyw glew anhangryud
 Llywelyn gelyn Gwyned
 Pieu yr ysgwyd esgutwal cynnwau
 Ar canwaew am y tal
 Pwy'r glew llew llit aer ddywal
 Ae deily cyfrwng dwy brennial, &c.”

“Has no one asked?—Have none been anxious to know,
 Before his iron garb be stained with red.
 What youth is he that wears his glittering vestment,
 What hero is the stately person in front?

An exalted chieftain is he, we give to know,
 None other wears them;
 A leader bold, daring and warlike,
 Llewelyn, the enemy of Gwynedd.

Whose is the shield rapidly moved, of noble rank,
 With the burnished lance in its front?
 Who is the hero of lion wrath, dauntless in battle,
 Who grasps it by its two handles?

It is the shield of Llewelyn, the chief of his country's honour,
 Such is that shield, we do assert,
 A shield with a shoulder in it;
 A shield with terror in its front.

Whose is the sword so boldly brandished,
 Of inevitable wounds?

Renowned champion! doubtless it will be related,
 How it committed slaughter in his right hand.

He that brandishes it is the defender of dwellings;

Amidst the rapid hewing down
 Of the besieging combatants, in the day of battle,—
 He is the hero of Mechain, the glory of his country.

Whose is the helmet of the red-visaged battle,

With the fierce wolf on its summit ?

Who is the valiant one on the grey steed ?

What is his name of such distinguished rank ?

He is called the long-handed Llewelyn,

The chieftain who terminates the tumults of the land ;

Loud is the battle shout of his warriors,

The ravager of Lloegyr.

Whose is the coat of mail, compact, unyielding ?

It will not retreat till death—

What man is he of noble extraction ?

We demand before all, what is his origin ?

He is the renowned and valiant leader ;

He is bold and slaughtering ;

Powerful with the mighty lance, wrathful in conflict ;

The son of Meredith, son of Madawc.

Whose is the war-horse, daring the foremost ranks

With the fearless march ?

And the warrior enjoying the respect of his followers ?

And the spear with the impetuous thrust ?

He is a firm support,

As long as God continues with him.

The vanquisher of warriors, manly and fame-enjoying,

The protector of the congregation of Tysilio."

The Ode contains several stanzas more, much in the same strain.

There is extant another Ode in the same metre, by some Bard so obscure as to be at present unknown, but he is supposed to have been one of the name of Peryf ap Cadifor ; this Ode exhibits, in a very striking manner, the daring and fearless spirit which pervaded the Principality at that time, and was cherished by all ranks of people, whether Bards or warriors. The Ode under consideration, was composed after the death of Hywel son of Owain Gwynedd, who was slain in 1169 ; the Bard was one of seven brothers, his partisans and intimate friends, and was present at Prince Hywel's death, when the Bard had four brothers slain, whose fate he laments :—

"Tra fuam ein saith triseith ni'n beiddiai

Ni'n ciliai cyn ein lleith

Nid oes ysywaeth o'r seith

Namyn tri trin dioleith, &c."

"Whilst we existed all seven, three sevens would not dare us.

We would not retreat before being slain ;

There are not, alas ! of the seven, -

But three unslain in battle.

Seven men we were, irreproachable, unmoveable,
 And irresistible in our combined assault ;
 Seven men, firm, who would not step back in retreat,
 Seven once were we, who would not suffer injustice.

Since Hywel has gone the deadly road of battle,
 To us, who were with him,
 There is to-day the lamenting of his loss,
 To him there is the enjoyment of the fairer society of heaven.

The sons of Cadifor, a numerous progeny,
 In the dell above the beach, [Pentraeth]
 They were valiant, bold, and resolute,
 They were slain along with their foster brother. &c."

The aforesaid prince, Hywel the son of Owain Gwynedd, and who for a short time enjoyed the throne of North Wales, was himself a very elegant Poet: there are several of his compositions extant, containing some exceedingly beautiful touches, but, where so much depends upon diction, it is very difficult to convey the true spirit of the original through the medium of a translation. Indeed, this difficulty must be felt in the translation of poetry in general, but especially of Lyric poetry. As an instance of the untranslatable nature of some expressions, and in conclusion of the present section, the following lines are given from an Ode by Llywarch ap Llywelyn to Gruffydd son of Cynan ap Owain Gwynedd, composed about the twelfth century. The Ode commences as follows:—

" Rac rwy Dyganwy dygynwyre glyw
 O uon hyd uyn yw llyw llw agde
 Dy ryd a doryf dy re orwydawl
 Hyd y llewyrch llawr gwawr gwymf fore
 Dychymysc aerffysc yn aryfle desdur
 A'i gledyf fflamdur ag glot dyre
 Mab medel utcyrn heyrn dy he
 Gruffydd teyrnud tud Elisise."

In attempting a translation of these lines, we find ourselves between two difficulties. If the translation is paraphrastic, the Lyric spirit of the original is lost ; if, on the other hand, we make the translation literal, the finer touches become absolutely unintelligible. For example,—

Before the chief of Deganwy, heroes arise
 From Mona to Menevia,—leader of the resistless host.
 His army and his steeds will proceed
 As far as earth is illumined by the radiant dawn of morning.
 He mingles in the battle tumult, in the weapon-place of steel buck-
 lers,

With his sword of flaming steel, and his extending fame.
 Son of the reaping of trumpets, of irons of the valiant,
 Gruffydd, the royal chief of the land of Elissai !

Now, in this translation, though “the radiant dawn of morning,” may be good English, and express the meaning of the original well, yet it has not quite the effect of “*gwawr gwypmp fore*,” still it is intelligible ; but when we come to “the son of the reaping of trumpets, &c.” the whole sentence becomes totally unmeaning, and although the original expression is so beautiful and effective, every attempt to render it into English becomes a complete failure ; the *Ἀναξίφορμιγγες ὕμνοι* of Pindar is scarcely more difficult to deal with. The red-reaping of war is used by Aneurin, and is descriptive of the hand-to-hand encounters of those times, but the word “medel” does not signify the mere act of reaping by a single individual or a few persons, but it implies the general reaping festival, still kept up in Wales, where all the neighbours assemble to assist some particular person to cut down his corn, when the day is passed in bustle and exertion ; so that to a Welshman of the twelfth century, the “reaping of the field of battle by the sound of trumpets,” was an exceedingly significant expression, and greatly enhanced, by the “*heyrn dy he*,” the iron weapons, which were the implements of the bloody harvest, “*rhudd-fedel rhyfel*.”

The spirit of poetic composition continued, without much diminution, till the close of the thirteenth century, but soon after this period we perceive a falling off in the number of Bards, and also in the spirit of their compositions :* this must undoubtedly, in some measure, be attributed to the conquest of Wales by Edward the First, but we imagine that we can discover a tendency to decline in the powers of the *awen*, before this event, which appears especially in the too artificial construction of the verse, and the over-strained alliteration which is used. Still, we may assert that for at least 150 years, during part of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the *awenic fire* burned with exceeding brightness. Within that period, we may count upwards of forty Bards, few of whom do not rise above mediocrity, and many of them display talents of the highest order.

* We must admit a few exceptions, and amongst them Dafydd ap Gwilym, who flourished in the fourteenth century.

In reviewing the works of the foregoing, we are struck with a general resemblance throughout the whole period, and this resemblance consists in the Lyric character of the compositions. There is not the slightest approach to the Epic, nor, with the exception of one piece, is there any instance of the Narrative or of the Ballad style, and that is the *Awdl Fraith*, a production of doubtful origin, sometimes ascribed to Taliesin, but evidently of a much later date; and probably the work of some one of the name of *Ionas Athraw o Fynyw*, or *Ionas the Teacher of Menesia*, which name is in some copies attached to it; he, perhaps, was a monk of St. David's. It is called the *Awdl Fraith*, or *Mottled Ode*, on account of the Latin words which are frequently used to terminate the stanzas. The following from the commencement will suffice as a specimen of the style:—

“Ef a wnaeth Panton
Ar lawr glyn Ebron
A'i ddwyllaw gwynion
Gwiwlun Adda.

A phum can mlynedd
Heb fawr ymgeledd
Bu ef yn gorwedd
Cyn cael anima, &c.”

“Panton [Pantocrator] made on the ground of the vale of Ebron, with his blessed hands, the fair formed Adam.

“And five hundred years, with but little help, he was lying there before he received a soul.

“He then created, in the court of Paradise, of Adam's left rib, the beauteous Eve.

“Seven hours were they keeping the orchard, before meeting with Satan, the ranger of Tartarus.”

It then relates how they were driven from Paradise, and there was given them a spade to till the ground; also, an angelic messenger brought to Eve wheat seed, but she concealed the tenth part of it, and did not sow it. Afterwards, where the concealed seed was sown, there came up black rye instead of wheat, and for this reason tithe should be paid. The Ode concludes with a prophecy concerning the destinies of Britain; it refers to the announcement made by the angel to Cadwaladr, as related by Geoffrey of Monmouth.

WELSH LITERATURE.

PROSE.

FROM THE ELEVENTH TO THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

NOTWITHSTANDING the many works which may be supposed to have been lost, the Welsh are still in possession of some very interesting remains of this period in Prose, though by no means so numerous as those of the Bards. The principal works extant are the *Chronicle of Caradoc of Llancarfan*, and the *Brut of Tysilio*; or, more properly, the Ancient British Chronicle as re-translated into Welsh by Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, in the twelfth century, and the *Mabinogion*, or Ancient Mythological and Romantic Tales of the Welsh.

The *Chronicle of Caradoc of Llancarfan* is a most important work, as constituting the basis of Welsh History subsequent to the sixth century. It is written entirely in the Welsh language, and comes down, continued by some other hand, to the latter end of the thirteenth century.

The *Brut of Walter* is almost verbatim the same with the *Brut of Geoffrey of Monmouth*, both being, according to the assertion of their respective translators, taken from the same ancient British original. This work has long been discarded as an historical authority; but has, at the same time, increased in point of interest as a matter of literary curiosity, inasmuch as it has been the cause of forming a new era in literature, and founding a new school in imaginative composition; for it is to the *Brut of Geoffrey of Monmouth* that we are to ascribe the origin of the Arthurian cyclus of Romance, and perhaps much of the chivalrous spirit which pervaded the civilized world soon after, and whose effects continue to influence society even to the present day.

The *Mabinogion* are also, for similar reasons, exceedingly interesting, even as a portion of European literature, for

they not only belong to the Arthurian Romance, but carry out the system into greater lengths of detail, and altogether combine in establishing the fact, of the ancient legends of Wales having furnished the earliest materials of thought for the composition of works of imagination, in the modern languages of Europe.

There are, likewise, numerous biographical works, as the *Life of Gruffydd ap Cynan*, the *Lives of the Welsh Saints*, and also Treatises on Medicine, Music, &c. The Medical Treatise contains the practice of Rhiwallawn, Physician to Rhys ap Gryffydd, Prince of South Wales in the twelfth century.

IRISH LITERATURE

OF THE

Third Period.

FROM THE ELEVENTH TO THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

POETRY.

It appears impossible that Ireland should not have partaken in the effects of the great intellectual impulse which pervaded the world at the close of the eleventh century, and equally so, that this excitement should not have manifested itself in poetic and patriotic effusions during the Norman invasion in the twelfth; but such creations of the muse have either been lost, or else never committed to writing; or, on the other hand, they have been allowed to lie unnoticed in manuscript in some obscure depository, for, as yet, no such productions have been laid before us through the medium of the press.

IRISH LITERATURE.

PROSE.

FROM THE ELEVENTH TO THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

THE Prose Literature of Ireland has been more favoured than its Poetry, during this Period, as there is at least one work of importance extant, and that is the collection of records made by *Tegarnach*, known as his *Chronicles*. It is to be hoped that the Irish Societies will add to the quantity of native literature before the public, by putting in the press such works as may be found in manuscript in the various collections.

GAELIC LITERATURE

OF THE

Third Period.

FROM THE ELEVENTH TO THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

POETRY AND PROSE.

HAVING already placed the Ossianic remains under the heading of the Period prior to the eleventh century, we have now nothing left for the succeeding department, either in prose or verse. The same improbability regarding the silence of their Poets during this stirring era will equally apply to the Gael of Scotland as to the Gwyddelian kinsmen in Ireland; but the only reply we can make is, that there is nothing before the public that can, in any way, be made serviceable towards the illustration of the subject, as applicable to the present Essay.

Comparative Merits.

HAVING noticed the most important remains of Ancient Literature in the three languages under consideration, our next undertaking is the balancing of their several merits, and estimating their relative amount. In order to facilitate this task, it will be necessary to class these merits, so as to assign to each its own proper degree of excellence. We shall, therefore, consider them with regard to the *Quantity of Materials*—their *Poetical and Historical Merits*—and, lastly, their *Philological Importance*.

QUANTITY OF ANCIENT REMAINS.

As far as the remains of Ancient Literature, in either of the three languages before mentioned, have been laid before the public, or are generally known to exist in manuscript, the advantage is vastly in favour of the *Welsh*. The collection comprised in the *Myfyrian Archaiology* alone, is sufficient proof of such superiority; not to mention the *Mabinogion*, and other compositions which have since been added to the amount.

POETICAL MERIT.

THIS is a question, the deciding of which calls for no small degree of discrimination, inasmuch as these Poems are so very different in style and subject: the Welsh Poems being almost entirely Lyric, without the slightest character of the Epic, with but very few instances of the Narrative, and nearly as few of the Ballad style; whereas the Irish and Gaelic contain many long pieces in a regular and connected Narrative strain, with frequent instances of the Ballad style. They also exhibit occasional traces of the Lyric, but that is rather an exception than a characteristic. The supporters of Macpherson's Ossian have also laid claim to the Epic.

and in its defence produce the Poem of Fingal and others ; but the proofs of genuineness are not sufficiently satisfactory to establish such a claim ; therefore, as far as concerns the Epic, the three languages are in a state of equality, neither of them having any well-founded pretensions to that style.

The Welsh have also numerous pieces in the Didactic style, such as the triplets attributed to the Druids, and other compositions ; but of these the poetical merit is but small : they are for the most part little else than proverbial sentences arranged in a metrical form, and connected by other sentences, apparently introduced to assist the memory. Whether such pieces exist in the Irish or Gaelic does not appear ; all that can be said is, that such compositions have not yet been laid before the public, nor is their existence of much importance in the present comparison, as the style must rank so very low in the scale of poetic merit ; so that we shall return to the others. And here some remarkable traits of character present themselves as connected with the respective tastes of the several races. The Welsh Bards rejoice in the Lyric ; and when by chance they deviate but for a moment into the Narrative or Ballad, the style seems uncongenial with their spirit, and they instantly quit it, and return to their favourite strain. On the contrary, the Irish and Gaelic composers do but occasionally evince a Lyric taste, and on those occasions seem to exhibit a consciousness of having stepped out of their track, and an anxiety to return. Under these circumstances, then, it will not be surprising if we find that the Irish and Gaelic Poets have generally a story in hand, and that they tell their story well ; whereas the Welsh Bards have no story at all to tell, and therefore, whatever of history they record, must be collected from detached expressions and obscure allusions, without any connection, or any apparent intention that they should be received as historical facts. With such superiority of detail in favour of the Irish and Gaelic remains, we might feel disposed at once to assign them a higher order of merit as depositories of historical events. But here comes the drawback. All this taste for Narrative is also accompanied with a tendency to launch out into legendary and unreal occurrences, to abandon the severity of historical facts for the mere

creations of fancy. The Welsh Bards, as they merely introduced allusions, must allude to something already known. It might be a fabulous occurrence, but to be intelligible, it must have been long received as a fact, and not the creation of their own fancy; but the Ballad and the Narrative, to be attractive, must be the work of imagination either in the groundwork or the filling up.

Such being the case with regard to these several languages, the question begins to be reduced within pretty narrow limits, i. e. Welsh Lyric Poetry against Irish and Gaelic Narrative Poetry; but as the two styles are so different, it will be difficult to find a standard of comparison. Perhaps it will appear that each possesses an eminent degree of merit in its particular class, but which class claims the precedence is a question, the determination of which can scarcely be expected in the present Essay: and so for the present, all that can be done is to endeavour to ascertain the degree of merit, to which each particular division has attained in its respective class.

If we look at the Welsh Poetry as an incorporation of patriotic sentiment, and an expression of public and co-existent enthusiasm, connected with the real and immediate occurrence of national events, we feel constrained to assign it the highest place in the scale of European Poetry. Neither Greece nor Rome can furnish a parallel instance. Pindar stands alone in this class, but the subjects of his praise, though real existences, were not so strictly national. Modern Continental Europe is equally destitute of such instances. The Spanish Ballads are all Romances, whilst the *Trouvères* and *Troubadours* of France, the *Minnesingers* of Germany, and the *Scalds* of the North, occupied themselves either with fabulous events, or with those of such distant occurrence as to admit of their being treated as fables. As to the muse of Modern Britain, it has already been shown that she has been less patriotic, less grateful, and less mindful of national events, than even that of any other country whatever. It would be more desirable to give the Welsh *awen* its due meed of praise, without having recourse to such comparisons, but in an estimate of this nature, this comparison affords the only means of arriving at the required results. And with regard to the present inquiry, we must come to the conclusion, that the

Welsh Poems bear evidence of the existence of a spirit of patriotism in a far greater degree than those of the Irish or Gaelic.

As to the degree of genius exhibited in each in its respective class, we are also under the necessity of examining the standard of excellence acknowledged in other languages, in order to establish a criterion ; and here a curious fact presents itself. After three hundred years of Roman dominion, upon the departure of that people, the Welsh Poetry does not manifest the slightest resemblance to that of Rome, either in metrical construction or train of thought. The essentials of Roman metrical composition consist in *quantity* ; those of the Welsh are *rhyme* and *alliteration*. The Latin classic prosody does not recognize these latter arrangements, nor do the Welsh understand any thing of classic *quantity*. Neither is there any resemblance in the structure of the Poems of the two races. And if, amongst the classic Poets of either Greece or Rome, there is any one to whose works the Welsh Poems bear any resemblance, it is Pindar ; one, from his nation and language, not very likely to have furnished models of poetic composition to the Welsh Bards ; and even here the resemblance is not so close as to justify us in asserting an identity of style ; and we can only say, that if, in order to fix the character of the Bardic Poems, it were requisite to class them under the name of the ancient Poet to whose style they bear the nearest resemblance, we should certainly call them *Pindaric* ; a term which it does not appear could with propriety be applied to any portion of the Irish or Gaelic poetry, which comprises no Lyric Odes. But at the same time, we must not deny, that the Ossianic Poems contain many passages of a highly Lyric character, such as Ossian's *Address to the Sun* in *Carthon*, and also in *Caric-thura*, and which, even without the advantage of Macpherson's diction, must be allowed to belong to the highest order of poetic composition : still these Lyric effects are but transient, the bent of the Ossianic genius is more Narrative and Descriptive, and in these particulars, the Gwyddelian poetry has a decided superiority over the Welsh. As, in the Ossianic poetry, the narration is consecutive uninterrupted and the story well told, so the descriptive passages are minute and graphic in their representations ; whereas in the Welsh Poems there is but little

narration at all, and that little abrupt and desultory ; and with regard to the descriptive passages, though they are often highly poetic, yet, they partake of the same transient character ; they are but brilliant flashes of light, which for an instant produce an electric effect, and then the subject is altogether quitted, and some other idea started, to be dealt with in the same manner. But, notwithstanding this irregularity of proceeding, such is the sweetness of the versification, the correctness of the metre, the force and effect of the diction, and altogether the high-wrought character of the Welsh Ode, that the absence of the connected narrative is never felt, but on the contrary its introduction would only cast a shade of tameness over the Ode, and destroy much of its spirit. Let us imagine a stanza of narrative or descriptive matter inserted in Gwalchmai's spirited Ode, [p. 194,] or the Hirlas of Owen Cefeilioc, [p. 198,] and we cannot but comprehend the deadening effect of such an introduction.

QUALITY AND DEGREE OF INTENSITY OF POETIC FEELING.

In quality, the Welsh Bardic poetry is martial and animating, and in poetic feeling it is in a high degree ardent and impetuous. The Ossianic Poetry, on the other hand, is pathetic and melancholy, and at the same time heroic and sublime ; and if Macpherson's translation be admitted as a faithful interpretation of sentiment, it must be acknowledged that in sublimity of pathos, tenderness, and heroic melancholy, the Ossianic Poems are not only vastly superior to the Welsh, but probably to those of every other nation. How to form a just estimate in this case, is not so easily understood, unless some standard of excellence were admitted as a criterion ; and, in the mean time, we can only say, that if the Irish and Gaels on the one hand, hold out the Address to the Sun in Carthon as a specimen of excellence, and unsurpassable ; the Welsh may on the other hand produce the Address to Tudur and Moreiddig, in the Hirlas, as equally unsurpassable in its style ; and perhaps these two Celtic races might conjointly challenge the world to meet them on those grounds.

HISTORICAL.

POETRY.

It has already been shown, that the subjects of Welsh Poetry were chiefly passing occurrences of the day; whilst the efforts of the Irish and Gaelic muse were directed towards the celebration of fabulous and imaginary events. These facts must at once prove the superiority of the Welsh Poetic remains, as historical records. There are, of course, exceptions amongst each people, as for instance, the *Circuit of Ireland* in the Irish language, and the *Albanic Duan* amongst the Gaels, and on the other hand, the *Mythological* and *Arthurian* romantic poetry amongst the Welsh. But, taking into consideration the great mass of poetry belonging to each race respectively, we cannot hesitate a moment in deciding, that in an historical point of view, the Welsh remains possess a vast superiority over those of the Irish and the Gael.

PROSE.

The same decision will not apply to the Prose compositions of the three races, (if the Gaelic can be admitted into the comparison,) as the Prose Chronicles of the Irish, claim a degree of merit at least equal to the Welsh. All have their fabulous periods, and also their period of authentic record; and, upon the whole, we may place the historical writings of the Welsh and Irish upon an equality in this regard: they all contain much that is valuable and authentic. But, besides the Chronicles, there are other Prose compositions belonging to each race, of a legendary and imaginative character, as for example, the *Mabinogion* amongst the Welsh, and the *Three Tragical Stories* amongst the Irish. Of these the historical value is absolutely nothing; and if we are to compare their merits, we must look upon them merely as specimens of imaginative composition.

PROSE IMAGINATIVE COMPOSITIONS.

It is a singular fact, that the Poets and Prose writers amongst the Welsh, have taken up positions the very opposite to those of the same classes in other nations. The Bards

occupying themselves with the matter of fact occurrences of the day, whilst the Prose writers were employed in composing Romances ; for such are the Mabinogion, a series of tales, which for variety of incident, originality, and power of invention, are not to be equalled by those of any country prior to the revival of literature in modern times. Such an assertion will of course be immediately disputed, and the Arabian Nights and French Metrical Romances adduced in confutation. But it must be recollected, that the Arabian Nights, in their present form, are not older than the sixteenth century : such ancient Arabic tales as have been preserved, and which appear to be the rudiments of the present compositions, being greatly inferior in point of imagination and general interest. And with regard to the French metrical Romances of the middle ages, they are merely the legends of the Welsh translated and put into verse. Besides those stories which are to be found in the Welsh and French languages, the Mabinogion contain several others, which do not appear to have been known to the French, and which are equally original and interesting with them. Therefore, in thus claiming such a degree of eminence for the Welsh Tales as works of fiction, it must not cause surprise if we assign them a rank much higher than that which belongs to the same class of compositions in the Irish language.

VALUE

IN ELUCIDATING THE ANCIENT HISTORY, AND THE
MENTAL CULTIVATION OF THE INHABITANTS OF
BRITAIN, IRELAND, AND GAUL.

WELSH RECORDS.

FROM the addition of the ancient History of Gaul to that of Britain and Ireland, it may be presumed that it was intended, that the Essay should comprise a period anterior to the conquest of the two first named countries by the Romans ; if so, it must not be concealed, that we enter upon a very barren field indeed. The references to ancient Gaul, found in either British or Irish works, being exceedingly few, and

those so mixed up with fable and mythology, that it requires the greatest caution in receiving any of them as historical documents.

The earliest reference to Gaul, in the Welsh, is that which occurs in the *Brut* of Geoffrey of Monmouth, when it is said that Brutus and his Trojans, in sailing for Britain, turned into Aquitaine, up the Loire, and built the city of Tours, in honour of his nephew, Turonus. After that comes the story of Cordelia, daughter of King Lear, marrying Aganippus, king of Gaul. Then come several chapters containing the account of *Brennus*, which are undoubtedly indebted to the Roman historians for any portion of truth they may contain. Afterwards, we have account of Cassivellaunus and other persons of his time, and references to the intercourse betwixt Britain and Gaul at this period. Where these stories originated, it is not easy to determine; but it is certain that Geoffrey of Monmouth, however he might have embellished and made additions, nevertheless was not the inventor of them altogether, as we find several in Nennius, who tells us he got them partly from the British records.

There is also in the Welsh copy of the *Brut*, a curious legend respecting the three afflictions which happened to the Island of Britain, in the time of King Lud, the founder of London; whose brother, Llevelis, was then King of Gaul. The story is highly interesting for its fairy and legendary character; but as a matter of history, unless some greater light than has hitherto existed should be thrown upon it, we must consign it to the great depository of fiction, which is already so well stored, as regard British produce.

It is, notwithstanding, within the range of possibility, that some of these occurrences may be founded upon traditions handed down amongst the Britons themselves; but when we reflect that several centuries of Roman domination had brought in Roman history, the genuineness of the British traditions may be considered questionable, and therefore their historical value greatly neutralised if not entirely destroyed. Should any historian think differently, the field is wide, though the produce appear scanty, and something of a genuine and valuable description may be discovered amongst so much that is spurious and worthless.

IRISH RECORDS.

The Irish also claim a connection with Gaul, but the authorities they adduce are of so fabulous a stamp, and the events they record so inconsistent with other accounts, that we are under the necessity of discarding them altogether as authentic histories, and ranking them with the Chronicle of Geoffrey of Monmouth, to which we have already referred.

With the exception of the *Firbolg*, (which are supposed to have been a Belgic colony,) and of the Gaulish Belgæ, the earliest notice of any connection between Ireland and Gaul, is that in which it is stated, that one of the ancient Irish kings, named Labhra Longsach, was in his youth exiled to Gaul, and that he afterwards returned with a Gaulish colony, and established it in Ireland, in the part of the country at present occupied by the counties of Wicklow and Wexford. The other notices of any connection with Gaul, are of a date so much later, as not to come within the scope of this inquiry.

WELSH TRIADS.

As regards the value of these ancient remains, in elucidating the history of Britain and Ireland, it is sufficient to observe, that every writer on British history has always been anxious to avail himself of the assistance of the Bardic and other compositions preserved by the Welsh people. Amongst these documents, the Triads may be considered as amongst the most valuable. They refer to the first colonization of the island, and are so different to the legendary tales of the middle ages, and exhibit so much of the critical acumen, and historical science of the present day, that if we were not assured to the contrary, we might suppose they were actually framed by some enlightened and well informed modern historian. Instead of the story of Brutus and the Trojans, which was received as undoubted history till a comparatively recent date, the Triads attribute the colonization of the island to various tribes, arriving at different periods, and possessing themselves of different parts of the country, as the *Cymry*, the *Brython*, the *Celyddon*, &c. Indeed, in looking at these historical Triads, one is disposed to wonder how in an age of credulity and ignorance of the principles of

historical criticism, any person could so far divest himself of the Trojan pre-possession of the day and frame such documents, and yet at the same time, it is difficult to persuade ourselves that they were regularly handed down for so many ages without any corruption being allowed to creep in. The collector of these Triads lived 250 years ago, and from his known zeal and accuracy as an antiquary, there is every reason to believe, that he copied them precisely as he found them, and he speaks of his collecting them, and leaves us to understand that there were originally many more, which he was not able to find; therefore, the Triads must remain a puzzle, and until some proof to the contrary is adduced, they will doubtless continue to be received as historical and authentic documents.

IRISH HISTORICAL REMAINS.

However wild and fabulous the early Irish legends may be, nevertheless, every writer on ancient Irish history feels himself constrained to give them some degree of weight, as containing, though in a very distorted form, some portion of truth. The *Firbolgi*, *Milesians*, *Tuatha de danans*, &c. are all supposed to have been real colonies, that at some remote periods arrived in the island; but, unless decidedly confirmed by some other testimony, it would be the extreme of weakness and absurdity, to admit them to any place whatever in the real history of the country, however, they may serve to exercise our ingenuity, in endeavouring to extract from them some hints connected therewith.

MENTAL CULTIVATION.

It is very evident, that the grammatical structure of a language does not afford any criterion for determining the mental cultivation of the people by whom it is spoken. The *Basque* language far exceeds the other languages of Europe in copiousness of inflexion, and the finer shades of expression; and yet the *Basque* population does not manifest any degree of mental cultivation, beyond that of the other European races. Again, it is said that some of the Indian tribes of North America possess a language, so rich in its inflexions,

and the variety of its shades of expression, that no European language, not even the ancient Greek, can bear a comparison with it. The very verbs having their genders, together with other powers, with which we are totally unacquainted, and yet the people who speak this language are absolute savages, like the rest of the North American aborigines. In contrasting the fulness of this savage tongue with the grammatical poverty of the English, we might be led to look for a degree of intellectual advancement in the western forests, superior to that of New York and Pennsylvania; but, however paradoxical the fact may be, grammatical copiousness of expression appears to have little connection with the cultivation of the mind; therefore, in the present inquiry, we must look for some other criterion as connected with language. Here we must have recourse to the literary compositions extant in the several languages under consideration; and this criterion, we shall find generally supported by analogy: for amongst the savages of the South Sea, where the mind exhibits but few traces of cultivation, such compositions as have been committed to writing by voyagers, show a corresponding poverty of ideas. Their songs, the only compositions they possess, consist of a few sentences, continually repeated without any variety.* The following will suffice as an example of their style:—

“The stone has hit;
The man is killed;
His mother weeps;
His sister weeps; &c.”

The Negroes of Africa also exhibit an equal paucity of ideas in their songs, and the same monotonous repetitions of those ideas.

The North American Indians evince a higher degree of mental cultivation, and some of their orations, even after allowance is made for the European embellishments introduced by translators, possess considerable merit; though compared with those of civilized nations, the ideas they contain have

* The same remark will apply to the formation of compound words. It does not always indicate the state of civilization of the people. The *Fire-water* of the Indian does not bear the impress of a savage intellect, more than the *Fire-damp* of the Englishman, or the *Mustum-ardens* [Moutarde] of the Frenchman.

not much variety, and the transitions are generally abrupt. It must be acknowledged that, hitherto, we have had but few opportunities, or rather none at all, of judging of the merits of Indian oratory or poetry, as the native compositions of the aborigines, in their wild and unsophisticated state, have never been laid before the public, in a form to undergo the analytical examination necessary to determine this question. However, by a comparison of extremes, and their intermediate gradations of savage and civilized life, and their several modifications, together with the compositions belonging to each state relatively, we are led to the conclusion, that however fallacious grammatical structure may be as a criterion of mental cultivation, yet, literary composition affords a surer test, and even one that may be relied upon with confidence, where the quantity of matter is sufficient to justify a decision : but as we possess no example of Celtic composition, that can be proved to be of a date anterior to the introduction of Christianity, nor any that can, with any degree of certainty, be attributed to any period of greater antiquity than the sixth century ; we are in the present inquiry, left to such inferences as may be drawn from the probable changes that five hundred years might have produced. It is certainly a long period, and under some circumstances sufficient to have obliterated all traces of resemblance ; but there are reasons for believing that to the ancestors of the Welsh nation, those five centuries were not so revolutionizing as to produce this effect. Whatever changes did really take place in the habits of the people, must be attributed to two different causes ; the influence of Roman dominion, and the progress of Christianity. With regard to the former, it is evident that it was not so great as many have inconsiderately assumed. Had it been so, we should have perceived traces of it in the language and traditions of the people, instead of which, we find them, on the departure of the Romans, in possession of their original language with but little of Latin mixture, and of their native poetry, not in the slightest degree partaking of the characteristics of classic prosody. Nor was the continuance of the Roman power amongst the Welsh, of quite as long duration as is often supposed. The country was not even brought into

subjection till near the close of the first century, and before the end of the fourth, i. e. A.D. 383, on the revolt of Maximus, the Legions were withdrawn from Wales, and the country left to its own government. At this time, it is evident that Roman influence was by no means powerful; for the Roman divisions of the country were abandoned, and others adopted. As to the Roman laws, it is equally evident that they were also abandoned altogether, or, what is more probable, that they never prevailed; as when in the tenth century, the Welsh legislator Howel Dda framed his code, he adopted the ancient British Laws of *Dyfnwal Moelmud*, nor can we discover in this code any traces of Roman jurisprudence. In fact, in whatever point of view we regard the country, every feature is perfectly Celtic; the language, the poetry, the laws, and social constitution, even the names of individuals are Celtic, as well as those of the new kingdoms which had just been formed.

In the next place, Christianity would not have made much progress during the two first centuries, and afterwards there were so many obstacles in the way, that until the sixth century, we can hardly consider it as completely established in the country.

If, therefore, at the present day, after an Anglian dominion of twice the duration of that of Rome, the people of Wales still retain their ancient language, it is but reasonable to infer that their attachment to that, and to their national habits in general was not less strong in their primitive and unmixed state.

Again, as we know the hold that religious creeds have upon the mind, and how difficult it is, even with the powerful aid of the press, to eradicate ancient prejudices; we cannot avoid the inference, that as late as the sixth century there were still existing amongst the Welsh, considerable remains of the ancient Druidic system, and that possibly some of the ancient Poetry of that people may be in style and character, if not actually in composition, identical with that of the Druidic age.

Allowing, therefore, the plausibility of this argument, we may proceed to consider the degree of mental cultivation indicated by the style and substance of such compositions as we may suppose to exhibit most of the Druidic character. And

here we must recur to the ancient triplet stanzas, and alleged Druidic hymns already cited. A few examples of these have been already given, we might add to them to an extent much too great for the present Essay, but it would be found that the style is of the same didactic character throughout. We may, however, give a few examples. The following are from collections of Stanzas attributed to Cattwg Ddoeth, (St.Cattoc) who lived in the sixth century. The first stanza contains a sentiment identical with one in the Druidic triplets preserved by Pomponius Mela and Diogenes Laertius:—

“Gnawd i lwrf ei ladd yn ffo
Gnawd i ddewr ddianc o daro
Gnawd i wás gwyh a fynno.”

Often is the coward slain in flight ;
Often does the brave come safe from fight ;
Often does the strenuous accomplish what he desires.

The following give an idea of the kind of moral instruction conveyed by means of this species of composition :—

“Gwilia ferw dy fryd bennoeth ;
Gwell pwyll i ddyn nog aur coeth.
Gwell aneu no byw annoeth.”

Watch the ebullition of thy mind daily ;
Better is prudence for a man than refined gold ;
Better is death than unwise living.

“Gwilia’th dafawd ac a wnel ;
Ond llafar nid diymgel ;
Pob un a glyw lle nas gwel.”

Watch thy tongue and its actions ;
There is nothing so unconcealable as utterance ;
People hear where they do not see.

“Ystyr pob gair a’i ddiwedd ;
Dir tál i bob amynedd ;
Ac ni thwyll pwyll pen a’i medd.”

Consider every word and its consequences ;
Certain is the reward of all patience ;
And prudence will not deceive that head that possesses it.

“Gwna y goreu yn dy angen ;
O’r peth a fo’n dy be’n
Gwell no dim gwasgawd brwynen.”

Do the best in every necessity,
Of that which is in thy power ;
Better than nothing is the shelter of a rush.

There are other stanzas in the same style, containing the sayings of the crow.—

“Brân a gant chwedl yn nyffryn,
Wrth chwiliaw am ei gronyn;
Nid dysg dysg heb ei ddilyn.”

A crow sang a saying in a valley,
By searching for her morsel;
Learning is no learning without being followed.

“Brân a gant chwedl ar uchder
Derwen, uch deuffrwd aber;
Trech deall no grymusder.”

A crow sang a saying on the height
Of an oak, over the two streams of confluent rivers;
Understanding is more powerful than strength.

This last sentiment appears an anticipation of Bacon's celebrated maxim, “Knowledge is power,” and we even find the maxim itself, in the identical words of Bacon, as far as the idiom of the two languages will admit; in a composition attributed to St. Cattwg, i. e. “Nid gallu ond gwybod,” Knowledge is power. There is also an adage, “Nid gallus ond call,” “There is none powerful but the wise.”

The crow is also made to utter some other maxims to the same effect, as—

“Brân a gant chwedl yn mlaen traeth,
Wrth nas gellynt ymarfaeth;
Nid meddiant ond gwybodaeth.”

A crow sang a saying at the head of a strand,
To those who could not pre-meditate;
There is no possession but knowledge.

The following is again in the Druidic strain of Pomponius Mela:—

“Brân a gant chwedl yn nidrain,
Ac o bell clywid ei sain;
Gorfydd dewr ar bob dichwain.”

A crow sang a saying in a solitude,
And its sound was heard afar;
The brave will overcome every event.*

Lhuyd gives a Cornish stanza in the same didactic style

* There is also an adage to the same effect,—

“Aed lew i gynhwrf cād, Duw a'i differ.”

“Let the brave man go into the tumult of battle, God will protect him.”

and triplet metre, from which we may infer, that the same species of composition was common in that language, though he says he only heard this one Englyn in the country.—

“An lavar koth yu lavar gwir,
Bedh dorn rê ver, dhon tavaz rê hîr ;
Medh dên heb davaz a gollaz i dir.”

“The old saying is a true saying,
The hand will be too short where the tongue is too long,
But the man without any tongue lost his land.”

Supposing, then, these specimens to represent, as far as they extend, the style and spirit of the Druidical didactic compositions, they give us at least a respectable idea of the moral feeling and mental cultivation of the people amongst whom they were framed. And if we see in them the mere fragments of a great, well organized, widely extended, and long established system of moral instruction, we must allow that a term of twenty years under its influence, could not pass away without producing corresponding effects ; and whatever liberties Tacitus may have taken with the speech of Caractacus, to adapt it to the Roman taste, it is not necessary to suppose that such alterations were an improvement, as the term which that chieftain must have passed under his Druidical preceptors, was sufficient to evince a high state of mental cultivation, especially with a mind naturally strong and quick of preception. And again, when we find Galgacus exclaiming “*Omne ignotum pro magnifico est*,” may we not imagine that it was in the spirit, if not in the express words of “*Amheüs pob amcybod*” he expressed himself, and that the Roman annalist really obtained possession of that, and other portions of his address ; and however he might have embellished and refined, yet that he was not the actual fabricator of the whole harangue. Indeed, when we reflect that these chieftains had been brought up in the school of those masters of wisdom,—“*Magistrosq sapientiæ Druidas*,” who professed to know the form and magnitude of the earth, and to understand the movements of the stars, and who reasoned deeply concerning the nature of things, it is not too much to suppose that they were fully equal to the delivery of such harangues, and that these on record contain the substance of what was spoken, and are, to a certain extent, specimens of the eloquence of the race, *Facundia sua*.”

With regard to the alleged Druidical Poems, as some of them bear the stamp of considerable antiquity, as for instance the address to Beli, and as others are undoubtedly as old as the sixth century, (such as the Incantations of Aneurin,) it is but reasonable to suppose, that the non-Christian sentiments which they contain, are really of Druidic origin, and that these compositions are fair specimens of the Druidic school as it existed in the sixth century, and that it had not undergone much change from its primitive state. When, therefore, we review this argument as far as we have proceeded, we must acknowledge, that there is a great body of evidence in favour of a high degree of mental cultivation amongst those classes who exercised themselves in these studies, and if the mass of the population in the mean time remained in a less advanced state, the Celtic nations are by no means singular in that respect, the “οι πολλοι,” the “profanum vulgus,” the “swinish multitude,” has always been found in every country where civilization has made any progress. Indeed, the existence of such a class is the surest proof of the existence of intellectual improvement, as it argues, not the degradation of the lower orders, but the advancement of the higher. Had the Druids attempted to raise the multitude to their own level, they would have attempted an impossibility, and broken up their system. And had Tacitus’s Germans cultivated learning, they would have created a privileged class, and destroyed the savage equality in which they lived; if, indeed, there really existed amongst them such a state of society as he describes.

Having proceeded so far, our next inquiry is, what portion of Gaul these conclusions will apply to. And here we cannot do better than follow in the track of Dr. Prichard, who has distinctly mapped out that country, and separated between the Celtic and the non-Celtic divisions; and, according to his arrangement, the Northern parts of Gaul comprising Celtic and Belgic Gaul, were inhabited by nations of the Celtic race, whereas the division of Aquitaine contained a population of a different stock, which we may distinguish as a Non-Celtic people. Dr. Prichard also shows that these two divisions of the Gaulish population, that is to say, the Celtic and Belgic, were of the same branch of the Celtic

stock, and spoke one common language, with only slight idiomatic differences; and that this language was nearly allied to the Welsh: and after a close and critical examination of the subject, he comes to the conclusion, that the Irish people were much more remotely connected with those of Gaul, and formed another branch of the Celtic family, and also that the Irish language differed from the Gaulish, not merely in dialect and idiom, but also in its entire development, and that this systematic difference commenced at a period anterior to the arrival of the Celtic race in Europe.

Adopting therefore this arrangement, (and it would be difficult to find any arguments to justify its rejection,) we find the limits of our present subject considerably narrowed, as by this separation between the Irish and Gaulish races, the Irish language is excluded from any place in this department of the inquiry, respecting the elucidation of mental cultivation amongst the inhabitants of Gaul. And although the Irish people so far exhibited proofs of an original Celtic descent as to submit to the Druidic and Bardic jurisdiction, yet it does not appear that they acknowledged any connection with those orders in Britain and Gaul. And here we cannot avoid noticing what appears to be a strong argument in favour of Dr. Prichard's theory. The Gaulish Druidical Hierarchy is said to have been connected with that of Britain, and the youth of Gaul came over to Britain for instruction; but no mention is made of Ireland. Now had the Irish language been identical with that of Gaul, the language of Britain would have been unintelligible to the Gauls, and consequently the British education of the Gaulish youth a positive absurdity.*

Having, therefore, come to the conclusion that the Irish language cannot furnish any assistance in prosecuting the present inquiry, as respects either Gaul or Britain, we must now proceed with the investigation as far as Ireland itself is concerned; and here again, we must acknowledge that our task is very soon brought to a termination, as the remains of early literature in the Irish language are so few, and their

* *Query*,—Might it not have been analogous to sending Welsh youths to English Colleges, or English youths to Continental Colleges?—EDITOR.

connection with the pre-Ecclesiastic ages so unsatisfactory, that with such data, any inquiry founded, as this ought to be, upon the sole evidence of the Irish language, can only end in disappointment, and occasion a useless expenditure of time. Until the Brehon laws are published, and such other ancient documents as the language contains, this portion of our subject must remain in abeyance.

DURING the foregoing investigation, it may have been observed, that it was found necessary to class the literary productions under different eras; and this classification leads to another inquiry intimately connected with the intellectual development of the world, inasmuch as we are disposed to believe that such development has proceeded by impulses, and that these impulses have been of periodical recurrence. For example, amongst the Welsh, we find in the sixth century great mental excitement, and an extraordinary development of poetic genius, all of which gradually subsides, and in about two centuries has lapsed into a state of torpor. Again, in about seven hundred years, we find another outburst of the *awen* accompanied by an intellectual movement in the nation, i. e. in the twelfth century. And now again, in the nineteenth century, after a period of nearly the same duration of 700 years, we may imagine that we perceive a similar awakening, in the revival of the Eisteddfod, and the zeal with which the cultivation of the Poetry and language of the Principality has been resumed, together with the increasing spirit of nationality which is manifesting itself.

Should there be any connection betwixt these three epochs, there ought to be another at a similar interval of about 700 years prior to the sixth century, or about two centuries before the Christian era; but whether the occurrence of such a period of excitement is borne out by history, may perhaps be thought too fanciful a question, and too irrelevant to be entertained; nevertheless, should such an excitement have taken place, it would not have been confined to the Celtic nations, for as in the nineteenth, twelfth, and sixth centuries, we find the mental commotion general throughout Europe, we may

Imagine some analogous movement at the other period, some 200 years or more before the Christian era; and in the prosecution of this idea, as we know the three last to be periods of enterprise, and demonstration of public spirit; so we may suppose that the first was marked by a corresponding character; as in the nineteenth century we find railroads constructed, in the twelfth cathedrals and castles built, in the sixth new kingdoms called into existence; so in the first period, may we not fancy that we see the erection of new Druidical Temples, and Cromlechs—Stonehenge and others?

Balance of Merits.

HAVING thus completed our review of the literature of the three languages under consideration individually, viz. the Welsh, Irish, and Gaelic, our task is now to draw out a statement of the comparative merits of the literature of each language respectively; which we shall attempt in the following order.

QUANTITY OF MATTER.

As regards the quantity of matter before the public, both in verse and prose, as well as the number of authors whose works are extant, the Welsh language has vastly the advantage over the Irish and Gaelic.

ANTIQUITY OF COMPOSITIONS.

In priority of date, the advantage is also on the side of the Welsh; there being several works extant in that language which are acknowledged to be of the sixth century, whereas the same degree of antiquity, though claimed for the Irish and Gaelic, yet has not been established except in a few unimportant fragments.

POETIC MERITS.

In this particular, the balance is not so easily adjusted. The style of composition and species of merit differing so

greatly in each language, the Welsh Poetry being almost Lyric, whilst the Irish and Gaelic is Narrative and Descriptive. In the Lyric Ode, the Welsh has incomparably the advantage; but in the Ballad, the Narrative, and the Descriptive, the advantage is as decidedly in favour of the Irish and Gaelic.

HISTORIC MERITS.

In historical value, the Welsh Poetry greatly excels that of the other two languages, inasmuch as it treats of actual occurrences, whereas the other two deal more with fiction. In Prose, the Chronicles and Records of the Welsh and Irish are nearly of equal value.

ELUCIDATION OF ANCIENT HISTORY.

There being so little in either language that can properly be brought under this head, and that little so vague and destitute of every character of authenticity, no preference can be given to either.

MENTAL CULTIVATION, &c.

There is but little in the Welsh language that can be brought to bear upon this subject, even by inference; still, by inference, there is something, but in the Irish and Gaelic, as they belong to another branch of the Celtic family, we cannot expect to find anything, and accordingly the small advantage that exists must be placed to the account of the Welsh.

IMAGINATIVE MERIT.

FICTION.

Though the Welsh Poetry displays instances of brilliant imagination, yet they cannot properly be brought under the head of Fiction, being generally nothing more than Figures of Rhetoric; and in this respect the Welsh Poetry is greatly inferior to the Irish and Gaelic, which is chiefly taken up with Tales of Fiction. On the other hand, the Welsh Prose works of Fiction possess a vast superiority over those of the Irish and Gaelic.

INFLUENCE ON EUROPEAN LITERATURE.

WELSH REMAINS.

It is a somewhat extraordinary fact, that the two Celtic nations, the *Cymry* and the *Gael*, driven as they have been to the utmost limits of the West, should from those recesses exercise an influence on the European mind, to be equalled only by that of Classic literature. For when in the eleventh century, the intellect of Europe awoke out of sleep, after a repose of five hundred years, with but few exceptions, the world around presented nothing but a barren desert; the Latin language had passed away, and together with it all its classic imagery and associations, leaving in its stead little else than a number of rude and unformed jargons, of too recent origin to be the depositories of ancient traditions, and too imperfect to become the vehicles of new ideas. So the European mind in general, in its newly awakened state, however disposed to literary exertions, yet was not possessed of the materials of thought or composition. It was not so with the Welsh, they had preserved their ancient language unchanged, and with it their native legends and traditions; so that at the general awakening in the eleventh century, the Welsh had not to go about forming a new language, they were already in possession of a language copious and cultivated; its grammar, its syntax, and its prosody all fixed and acknowledged: nor had they to wander into other countries in search of ideas, they had their own national storehouse of historical and legendary materials amply furnished. Therefore, we must not be surprised that this intellectual abundance was called upon to supply the newly created wants of other countries, and accordingly we find the legends and traditions of Wales passing over to the Continent, and becoming the foundation of the vernacular literature of modern Europe. King Arthur and the Court of Caerlleon, formed the first subject of the French *Trouvères*, who themselves were the earliest composers of the Continent, in any of the recently formed languages. From France the British legends travelled into Germany and Scandinavia, and southward into Italy and Spain. “*Fu gloriosa Bertagna la grande—si che al Re Arture fa portare onore,*” says Boiardo

in the fifteenth century; and, from the manner in which Dante introduces the name of Lancelot, it is evident that the Arthurian Romances had found their way into Italy long before. Indeed, there can be no doubt that they were known there as early as the twelfth century, for Alain del'Isle, a writer of that period, speaking of King Arthur, says, "Cantat gesta ejus domina civitatum Roma." As to the influence of the Welsh legends on the literature of Spain, we need only refer to Don Quixotte, in which Merlin acts so conspicuous a part; and the reviewers of Don Quixotte's Library will testify to their influence in Portugal, when in opening the Romance of Palmerin of England,* one of them observes that "it is said to have been composed by an ingenious king of Portugal." It is almost a certainty that the Arthurian Romances penetrated even to Arabia; at least we have satisfactory evidence of their being current in Greece, from a Poem of the twelfth century in the Greek language being still extant, of which the heroes are the Knights of the Round Table.† This early impression, made by the Welsh legends, was never obliterated, but on the contrary may be traced through each successive generation down to the present day. Shakspeare founded several of his plays on Welsh legends. Milton intended making Arthur the hero of his Epic, and one of the most perfect Poems produced within our own time, "The Bridal of Triermain," proves how deeply the mind of Scott was imbued with Arthurian Romance.

* This *Palmerin of England* is probably *Paulmerion*, the ancient British king, and one of the ancestors of Vortigern, whose son Glouida founded the city of Gloucester. "Glouida filius Paulmerion, ipse autem Glouida ædificavit, urbem magnam super ripam fluminis Sabrinæ. quæ vocatur Brytannice sermone Cair Gloui."—*Nennius*.

† The Welsh names undergo some curious distortions in this Poem. *Arthur* is called Αφρουζοι, and *Greenhwyfar*, Ντζινιβρα, and *Gwalchmai*, or *Walganus*, is called Γαουλβανος. *Lancelot of the Lake* is ικ λιμνης Λανσιλωτοι, and the *Round Table Knights* are called Τραπεζις τοζ στρογγυλης. The following lines are from the Poem:—

Ο δε πρεσβυτης ειρηκειν, χαιρε μοι Γαουλβανι
Ο του ρηγος αδελφιδου Αφρουζου Βριτανισι.

and also the following line,—

Της κλησις επιφεροτι, Ουτερωπαντραγορου.

These names appear to have been received through the medium of the Italian. Ντζ is intended to represent Italian *G* in *Genetta*, and Γαουλβανος is *Galvani*, the Italian form of *Gwalchmai*.

In addition to the above causes, we may find another, in the superior imaginative power of the Celtic mind. There can be no doubt that the Franks brought with them their national legends into Gaul, but they had not vitality enough to continue in existence. It is equally unquestionable, that the Normans transplanted into Neustria their native traditions; the demonology of Thor and Odin, together with the legends of the ancient Scandinavian Sagas, but they did not take root there, they rotted in the soil. And in a few generations the Normans had forgotten their national heroes, and were celebrating the praises of Arthur and his Celtic associates. Of late, within a few years, the praiseworthy patriotism of the Germans has impelled them into an attempt to force into notice the ancient Teutonic legends of the Nieblungen, but without effect, as far as the rest of Europe is concerned; they are destitute of the qualities, whatever those may be, which are necessary to interest the mind.

IRISH AND GAELIC REMAINS.

As in the twelfth century the Welsh Legends were productive of a new creation of thought, in the sentiment contained in the Romances of Chivalry, and which may be designated as the Arthurian; so in the eighteenth century, the Gwyddelian Poems gave existence to another creation, equally distinct in character, and which is the Ossianic. The powerful nature of this sentiment is evidenced in the rapidity with which it extended itself over the civilized world, the electric effect it produced wherever it made its appearance, and the influence it exercised on literature, and probably still continues to exercise on the literate mind. And although the Ossianic Poetry has not been so extensively influential as the Arthurian Romances, yet it is quite as distinct in character, and its peculiar style of sentiment has, within the limits of its operation, produced as deep an impression on the mind.

We shall now proceed to form a Scale of Merits of the literature of the several languages, in order that their respective claims may be brought under one view.

Scale of Merits.

In the following Scale, superiority of quality is denoted by an asterisk. The Irish and Gaelic Poems being claimed by each country, their merits are here stated according to the interpretation given to them by each: the Scotch interpreting them in the Ossianic style, and the Irish in the Ballad style.

	WELSH.	IRISH.	GAELIC.
Quantity of Materials	*	... 0	... 0
Number of Authors	*	... 0	... 0
POETRY—Lyric	*	... 0	... 0
Ballad—Narrative	0	... *	... 0
Heroic—Narrative „	0	... 0	... *
Ballad—Fiction „	0	... *	... 0
Heroic—Fiction „	0	... 0	... *
Historic „	*	... 0	... 0
PROSE—Historic equal ...	=	... =	... 0
Fiction „	*	... 0	... 0
Elucidation of Ancient History	*	... 0	... 0
Elucidation of Mental Cultivation ...	*	... 0	... 0
Influence on European Literature ...	*	... 0	... 0
Total of advantages	8	... 2	... 2



Rev. Thomas Price,
CARNHUANAWC.

After a cutting done from the Life by Lady Hall of Llanover, at Abercarn, April 25, 1833.

AN ESSAY

ON

The Influence which the Welsh Traditions

HAVE HAD ON THE

Literature of Europe.

BY

Agnach ab Mydno.

"Hic jacet Arthurus, Rex quondam, Rexque futurus."

AT the Abergavenny Eisteddfod of October, 1838, a Subscription Prize of Sixty Guineas was given for the best Essay on "The Influence which the Welsh Traditions have had on the Literature of Europe." There were five Competitors, and the Prize was awarded by Mr. Hallam, the eminent Historian, to J. D. Hardinge, Esq. of Glanogwr, Glamorganshire, chiefly, it is supposed, for his work's superiority of diction. The intrinsic merit of the present Essay was, however, so highly appreciated by the Chevalier Bunsen, and several other eminent Scholars, that they pressed Mr. Price to consent to its immediate publication. This he refused, fearing it might appear like an attempt to impugn the decision of the Adjudicator; to which, by sending in the Essay for competition, Mr. Price considered that he had tacitly consented to abide. His continued interest in this Essay is proved by various additions made to its illustrative passages at subsequent periods. Among them were the quotations from an Opera of Dryden's, made after its public performance in London in the year 1842; and from a German Drama, translated and reviewed in a periodical work of 1844.

Under the same signature as that originally affixed to this Essay, Mr. Price gained the Prize of £30, and a Medal of £5, at the Liverpool Eisteddfod of June, 1840, for "The best History in Welsh of the Welsh Princes;" the substance of which is embodied in his "Hanes Cymru."

The Influence which The Welsh Traditions have had on the Literature of Europe.

INTRODUCTION.

WHEN we contemplate the state of Europe during those ages which immediately succeeded the fall of the Roman Empire, we find that, with few exceptions, the whole presented one general blank ; as far as the intellectual energies were concerned, for many centuries, the mind of Europe was in a state of profound sleep. But all at once, about the commencement of the twelfth century, a general awakening is observed, and this torpor is shaken off. But what is the occupation that engages the renovated intellect on its first starting into a state of activity ? Here an extraordinary phenomenon presents itself ; immediately upon this resuscitation, we find the whole world engaged in relating and listening to stories concerning Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. In fact, the renovated mind of Europe, and indeed of the world in general, was at this time engaged in celebrating the ancient heroes of the Welsh, and holding them up as models of valour, and of every other quality which in those days was considered estimable. How these ancient

traditions of a secluded people found their way to the Continent, may be partly explained ; to what extent they influenced the mind, may also be shown with some degree of correctness. But why these, the legends and traditions of so remote a race, should exercise such absolute dominion over so many active and powerful states, is a question which involves arguments too extensive, and perhaps too irrelevant to the subject of this Essay, to be introduced. Were an answer to such an inquiry within its scope, the universality of the reception which these ancient legends experienced, would lead to no other conclusion than that of the evidence of some exceedingly fascinating qualities in those legends, a superior order of imagination, and more commanding genius. Whether to attribute this to the greater cultivation of intellect under the Druidical discipline, or to a higher strain of imagination amongst the Cymraeg race, I shall not undertake to decide. But the facts now brought under consideration, will, I feel assured, most fully establish the existence of such an influence, not only amongst the neighbouring States, but even in the remotest portions of the civilised world.

THE INFLUENCE OF WELSH TRADITIONS, &c.

WHEN the Roman Empire was broken up, and all its institutions overthrown, in the great irruption of the Barbarian nations of the North, so complete was the devastation, that not only was the Imperial dominion annihilated, but even the very language of Rome suffered total extinction, as a medium of general communication, and all the ideas peculiar to its literature ceased to exist. In short, all that may be characterised by the term Classic, either in colloquial intercourse or literary composition, entirely disappeared, as far as regards its influence upon society; and excepting where the secluded Ecclesiastic pursued his theological studies, in the retirement of his cloister, even as early as the beginning of the seventh century, the Latin language had altogether passed away.

But it may be asked, Was the Latin ever the general language of the Roman Empire in the provinces and distant colonies? To this it may be answered, Certainly not: for in many parts of Britain the natives continued to retain their aboriginal tongue. In Gaul, it is evident that the pure Latin was never the language of the rural population; even in Italy itself, there are strong reasons for believing that in many districts, a language was spoken very different to that of the capital; but, nevertheless, during the existence of the Imperial Supremacy, in all the provinces of the Western Empire, the Latin, according to its Classic construction both of grammar and syntax, was the court and military language, and the organ of all official documents in church and state, and, most probably, the colloquial language of all who aspired to the rank of gentlemen, as citizens of the Empire. That this cultivation of the Latin was prosecuted, even in the remotest colonies at a very early period, we have the authority of Tacitus, who in speaking of the Britons which had

submitted to the Roman government, says, that such was the influence which Agricola exercised over them, that those among them, who had once rejected the language of Rome, did at length not only cultivate it, but even aspire to the attainment of eloquence in it, "*Ut qui modo linguam Romanam abnuebant, eloquentiam concupiscerent.*"*

GAUL.

HAD the Roman power still continued, it is probable that the Latin language would have gradually extended itself, and through the influence of classic literature, established itself as the colloquial language of Europe. But its progress was arrested at a period when the provinces had but partially acquired a knowledge of it, and the languages they spoke were nothing more than the corrupt dialects, or rather uncouth jargons, formed of the words of that language, altered and mutilated; with perhaps a considerable mixture of the ancient languages of those countries. Even amongst the higher classes of society, and those persons who from their rank and profession must have received the most liberal education of the day, we find, that as early as the sixth century, even in the heart of Gaul, the cultivation of the Latin had so far declined, that few, if any, possessed a perfect knowledge of it, inasmuch as Gregory of Tours acknowledges and laments his ignorance both of rhetoric and grammar. He says, he did not understand either the declensions of nouns, or the placing of prepositions, and that he confounded the masculine and the feminine, the ablative and accusative; and he accounts for his undertaking to record the history of his time, by saying that such was the decline of literature, that no one else could be found capable of such a work, either in prose or verse.† It is true that the writings of Gregory of Tours, as now found in print, do not betray such excessive ignorance of grammatical skill, but this is accounted for by the supposition that subsequently to the revival of learning,

* *Agricolæ Vita.*

† "*Decedente atque imo pereunte ab urbibus Gallicanis liberalium cultura literarum—, cum non reperiri posset quisquam peritus in arte dialectica grammaticis, qui hæc aut stylo prosaico aut metrico depingeret versus.*"

some transcribers better acquainted with the language, corrected such inaccuracies as they met with in his writings, and in confirmation of this, D. Ruinart, who edited an edition of his work, assures us, that there are in existence manuscript copies, which really exhibit all the incorrectness of style which the author himself describes.*

But although Gregory of Tours thus laments his inability to write the Latin language correctly, nevertheless, the language he does write is really Latin, however it may be disfigured by occasional inaccuracies. Besides this unclassic style of language, there was another species of Latin in use, which had by no means such pretensions to the name, inasmuch as it was avowedly a vitiated variety of that language, and was called by various names significant of its corrupted form, such as *Usualis*, *Gallica*, *vulgaris*, *simplex*, *rustica*, *militaris*, *ruralis*, *plebeia*, &c. Of this dialect no specimen remains. However, from what we find in the legal Latin of those ages, it may be inferred that the colloquial language had departed very far from that of ancient Rome; for D. Ruinart presents us with a collection of certain forms of legal documents, consisting of wills, cessions, oaths, &c. according to the usages of Angers, and which as they appertained to the public records of the country, we may suppose were as free from grammatical inaccuracies as was compatible with their usefulness as public documents, and consequently they most probably afford us specimens of what was considered a good style in those days, and yet they manifest such confusion of grammar and syntax, that it must be allowed that the Latin language had at this time ceased to exist, as far as its peculiarities of structure are concerned. The following form of a marriage settlement, will be sufficient to explain this statement. The first part is pure Latin, being the common preliminary sentence in use during the Roman dominion. The English interpretation is from the French of Legrand.

“Dulcissima et cum integro amore
diligenda sponsa mea, filia ill.
nomen ill, ego ill, Et quia propitio
Domino juxta consuetudinem una cum
voluntate parentum tuorum sponsavi.

* Legrand, Paris, 1829.

Thus far the pure Latin, now comes the *lingua Romana rustica*.

“ Proinde cido tibi de rem panpertatis
meæ, tam pro sponsalitia, quam pro
largitatæ tuæ, hoc est casa cum
curte circumcincta, mobile et
immobile, Silvas, pratus, pascuas.
Tu dulcissima sponsa mea ad
die filicissimo nupciarum tibi
per hanc cessione dileco atque
transfundo, ut in tuæ jure hoc rocepere
dibeas. Cido tibi bracele valente
Solidus tantus, toneneas tantas,
lectario ad lecto vestito, valente
Solidus tantus, inares aureas valente
Solidus tantus, annolus valentes
Solidus tantus. Cido tibi caballus cum
sambuca et omnia stratura sua, bores tantus,
vaccas cum sequentes tantus, ovis tantus,
Solidus tantus.”

“ My dearest spouse, whom I love with
perfect affection, the daughter of N.
by name N. I N. And because by the
favour of the Lord, I have espoused thee,
according to due form and with the consent of thy parents,
I cede to thee out of my poor possessions,
as well on account of our marriage as for
thy own wealth, that is to say, a house
with its surrounding court, the moveables
and fixtures, woods, meadows, pastures.
Thou, my beloved spouse, from the most happy
day of our nuptials I give and transmit
to thee by this ceding, that thou mayest
receive this in thy own right. I cede
to thee a bracelet worth so many
sous, so many [casks q.] bed—
furniture worth so many sous, gold
ear-rings, worth so many sous, a ring
worth so many sous. I cede to thee
a horse with his saddle and all his
harness, so many oxen, so many cows
with their calves, so many sheep,
so many sous.”

When such was the state of the Latin language used in the public documents of the country, it may be supposed that the colloquial language of the peasantry must have been still more corrupt. And it appears that this corruption gradually extended itself, till at length the language of France bore but a very remote resemblance to its Roman parent, and in confirmation of this, we find several curious documents of the ninth century, in which this change of character is very perceptible. It consists of the oaths, which were

taken in 842 by the two sons of Louis le Débonnaire—Charles le chauve, and Louis de Bavière—together with their respective armies.

After several years of war, these two princes met at Strasbourg, and entered into a treaty of peace, and each swore at the head of his army, and each soldier took an oath to the same effect. The following are the two forms of the oaths as pronounced in the Romance, or French language:—

THE OATH OF LOUIS DE BAVIERE.

“ Pro Deo amur et pro xristian poblo
et nostro commun salvacion, d’ist
di en avant, in quant Deus savir
et podir me dunat, si salvarai eo
Sist meo fradre Karlo, et in adjudha
et in cadhuna cosa, si cum om per
dreit son fradra salvar dist, in o
quid il mi altresi fazet ; et ab
Ludher nul plaيد nunquam
prindrai qui, meon vol, cist meon
fradre Karle in damno sit.”

TRANSLATION.

“ For the love of God and for Christian people
and for our common salvation, from this
day forward, as far as God gives me
knowledge and power, I will defend this,
my brother Charles, and will assist him,
in every thing, in which every one
ought in justice to assist his brother,
and which he himself shall do to me
on the other hand ; and I will never
enter into any treaty with my brother
Lothaire, willingly, which may injure
my brother Charles.”

THE OATH TAKEN BY THE ARMY OF CHARLES.

“ Si Lodhuuigs sacrament que son
fradre Karlo jurat, conservat, et
Karlus, meos sendra, de sua part
non lo stanit, si io returnar non
li’nt pois ; ne io, ne neuls cui eo
returnar int pois, in nulla adjudha
Contra Lodhuwig nun li iver.”

TRANSLATION.

“ If Louis keeps the oath which he
swears to his brother Charles, and
if Charles my lord, on his part,
does not keep it ; if I can not turn
him, and if neither I nor any other
can turn him, I will not assist
him in any thing against Louis.”

In this composition, we find a very decided change in the character of the language from that which it bears in the preceding document; and in the next examples which we meet with, there is still further departure from the original Latin, but, at the same time, there is a much more perfect structure, and nearer approach to the form which the French language afterwards assumed, and which, with a few exceptions, constitutes its individual character at the present day. As to the earliest specimens of the French language, properly so called, there are several opinions; but those specimens bear so strong a resemblance to each other, that it can be of little consequence to which of them the claim of priority may belong, as they are evidently formed of the same materials, and cast in the same mould; and when compared with the Latin, the resemblance will be found so remote, that had we not decided evidence of their origin and descent, we should be justified in concluding them to belong rather to some cognate dialect of that language, than to one regularly derived from it. The Abbé de Larue gives the following specimen, which he believes to have been composed prior to the year 1000; he believes it to be the most ancient specimen extant of the northern division of the French language, though he acknowledges that some persons maintain the impossibility of that age having furnished any thing of the kind:—

“ Si ti veu de Rein savoir ly eveque,
 Lye le temporair de Flodoon le saige,
 Y les mor du tam d’Odalry eveque,
 Et fut d’Epernay nè par parentage;
 Vequit caste clerc, bon moine, meilleu abbé,
 Et d’Agapit ly romain fut aube;
 Par san histoire maintes nouvelles sauras
 Et en ille toute autiquite auras.”

Legrand gives a specimen which, according to his judgment, must be older than the above, although he does not undertake to fix its date. The specimen is as follows:—

“ En un jor, je depreissez de mult
 grandes noises dez alquanz sécollirs
 as queiz, en lur negosces, a la foiz
 Sumes destraint solre, meismes ce
 ke certe chose est nos nient devoir,
 Si requis un secrete liu est amis a dolor.”

LATIN TRANSLATION.

"Quadam die nimis quorundam
 Secularium tumultibus depressus,
 quibus in suis negotiis plerumque
 Cogimur solvere etiam quod nos
 certum est not debere, secretum
 locum petii amicum doloris."

But whatever may be decided respecting the antiquity of the above, we have several compositions of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, whose genuineness is placed beyond dispute, and whose distinguishing features are so similar, that we may conclude that at this period, the French language had assumed that form which has ever since constituted its peculiar character as a distinct language. The following extract from the laws of William the Conqueror, may suffice to illustrate this fact.

"Si home fait plaie a autre et
 il denie otrei fair les amendes ;
 primerement li reude sur le
 Chefe, et li plaiez jurraz sur
 Sentez pur mes nel pot fair, &c."

TRANSLATION BY SELDEN.

"Si quis alium percusserit, et
 neqaverit ultra emendare primo
 reddat sur le chefe et plaqas et
 jurat super sancta quod aliter
 non potuit facere."

The following extract from the Brut of Wace, which was finished in the year 1155, will suffice to show the state of the French language at that period, and which may be considered as having then assumed the character which distinguishes it at the present day. The specimens here given are taken from two different copies of the same work, in the king's library, in Paris, as given in the edition of the Brut printed at Rouen, 1836.

MANUSCRIPT DU ROI, NUMBER 73 CANGE, &c.

"Qui vialt oïr et vialt savoir,
 De roi an roi et d'oïr en oïr,
 Qui cil furent et dont vinrent
 Qui Engleterre primiers tinrent,
 Quer rois ja en ordre eu
 Et qui ençois et puis i fu
 Cil reconté la vérité
 Qui lo Latin a translaté
 Si com li livres le devise
 Quant Greu orent Troye conquise."

MANUSCRIPT NUMBER 27 CANGE.

“Ki velt oïr et velt savoir,
 De roi en roi et d’oir en oïr,
 Qui cil furent et dont il vinrent
 Qui Engleterre primes tinrent,
 Qans rois i a en ordre en
 Qui ançois et qui puis i fu,
 Maistre Gasse l’a translaté.
 Qui en conte la vérité.
 Si com li livres le devise
 Qant Griu orent Troie conquise.”

Such are the data afforded us for tracing the progress of the French, evidently the oldest of the languages of modern Europe; and although the facts which we are able to establish are but few, and not always very positively determined, yet they leave no doubt upon the mind respecting the confused and unsettled state of that language for many centuries, and afford the clearest evidence that, during this period, there was nothing in that language that bore the name of literature: they also shew the absolute impossibility of any national literature having an existence.

But, in addition to the present French language, of which the foregoing are the specimens during its early stages, there was also another language in the South of France, called the *Provençal*, and also the *Romane Provençal*, to distinguish it from the Northern speech, which was called the *Romane Wallon*. This Southern dialect was also called the *Langue d’Oc*, as that of the North was called the *Langue d’Oil*.^{*} This Provençal language was copious, soft, and regular in its construction; and from the evident marks it bears of a Latin origin, many have supposed that it was the remains of the language of the Romanized population of Provence, the *Provincia*; but there are others who maintain that it was but of late introduction in that country, being in reality no other than the *Catalonian*, which was introduced as the court language by the counts of Barcelona, when those princes became counts of Provence in 1112; and in confirmation of this assertion, it is stated that the Provençal abounds with Catalan expressions; that the Troubadours, the minstrels of Provence, frequently address their compositions to the kings of Arragon and Castile; and that those princes often furnish subjects for the Provençal muse.[†]

^{*} Or rather *Langue d’Oui*.—Ed. [†] See a summary of these evidences in *De Larue*.

It must be acknowledged, this sudden and universal adoption of a foreign language would appear incredible, had we not instances of a similar kind in other countries; and amongst others, we may notice that of the introduction of the Norman into England, which, through the effect of its being the language of the court, became also the fashionable language of the higher classes, even amongst the Saxon population, and was that in which the minstrels composed, or recited their songs and romances; and if this court influence made such progress amongst a people of the grave and heavy temperament which characterized the Saxons of Britain, it may easily be conceived, that it would be still more powerful in its effects amongst the gay and volatile inhabitants of the South of France.

Perhaps there is an instance of the power of court influence, in effecting a change in the language of the people, still more to the point, in the introduction of the English language into Scotland, which took place in the eleventh century, in the reign of Malcolm Canmore, in consequence of that sovereign having married an English queen, and made his court an asylum for such Englishmen as fled to Scotland from the Norman persecution. From this time, English became the court language, and gradually banished the Gaelic, both from the capital and its vicinity; whereas, previous to that time it, had been the only language of the court and people.

But, whatever may be determined respecting the Catalonian origin of the Provençal, it is evident that no specimen of that language exists, that can with any degree of certainty be referred to a period antecedent to the twelfth century. One of the earliest specimens is the following translation of Boethius:—

“Nos jove omne quandius que nos estam,
De gran follia per folledat parllam,
Quar no nos membra per cui vivri esperam,
Qui nos soste tan quan per terra annam,
E qui nos pais que no murem de fam.”

“We all when we were young were foolish and talked folly, for we did not remember him by whom we live, who sustains us while we are on the earth, and feeds us that we die not of hunger.”

The following composition may with greater certainty be referred to its proper era, inasmuch as the author, Perdigor the Troubadour, died in 1269.

"All chans d'ausels commenza ma chanso,
 Cant aug chantar l'Agluenta et Aiglos,
 E p'els cortils vey verdeyar lo luis,
 La blava flors qe par entr'els boissos,
 E'l rin clar corren sobr' els sablos,
 La ù ses pand la blanca flor del lis."

"With the singing of the birds I commence my song, when I hear the lark and the singing, when in the fields I see the earth becoming verdant, when the blue flower appears among the bushes, when the clear brooks run over the sands, there where the white flower of the lily opens."

The following prose specimen will suffice to shew the character of the Provençal about the same period, that is, the middle of the thirteenth century.

"Et mentre aquest sant home cantava la messa vengro aqui quatre homes ces de longas terras, Et portec casque d'elhs un ciri ardent a la ma. E vengro a la capela, e cridero autament Verge Maria, mayre de Dieu gloriosa, ret nos salut."

ITALIAN LITERATURE.

IF in our researches respecting the French language, we find it so unformed as to be absolutely incapable of being applied to purposes of literature until a very short time prior to the twelfth century, when we turn our attention to Italy, we find the impossibility of such application of the vernacular idioms of that country still more prominent; inasmuch as from all that can be discovered, these idioms were more neglected, and consequently more confused, less adapted to literary composition than even the patois of France; and this neglect of the vernacular tongue, may, in some measure, be attributed to the fact of the Latin being more generally cultivated in that country.

In consequence of Rome being the Ecclesiastical metropolis of the western world, and the seat of the Pontifical court, and as all the official proceedings of the church were conducted through the medium of the Latin, it may be supposed, if that language was cultivated with any degree of attention, it must have been in Italy: but as the drawing up of Ecclesiastical documents, or even the composition of theological works in a dead language, can scarcely, with any degree of propriety, be entitled to the name of literature, at least as far

as its popular influence is concerned, we may assert it as an established truth, that prior to the twelfth century Italy did not possess any national literature.

SPAIN.

THE same arguments that have been used with respect to Italy, may with still greater confidence be adopted in the instance of Spain as it is very evident that the Spanish language is of even later formation than the Italian; so that whatever exists in that language, must be of too recent composition to be noticed in the present stage of this inquiry.

GERMANY.

THE late introduction of Christianity among the Teutonic nations, must of necessity limit the commencement of their literature to an equally recent period; and, consequently, as they date its origin no earlier than the beginning of the dark ages, it would be unreasonable to expect to find them in a more forward state than the other nations of Europe, prior to the eleventh century.

IRELAND.

THOUGH not within the pale of the Roman Empire, yet inasmuch as Ecclesiastical learning made its way into Ireland at an early period, the Irish can boast of a national literature perhaps as far back as the sixth century; yet, in consequence of the conquest of Ireland by the Danes, and the oppressive rule which those pagans exercised, the literature of Ireland suffered an exceeding great depression long before the eleventh century, so that this country may be said to have shared in the general obscurity which had passed over the world.

ENGLAND.

FROM the avidity with which the British youth in the first century sought the acquirement of the Latin language, there can be no reasonable doubt, that at the departure of the legions in the fifth century, the principal towns were completely Romanized, and that the Latin was the language

of the citizens in general, at least of those towns along the eastern coast, which admitted of more frequent communication with the continent. But when the Saxon invasion took place, so numerous were the bands that came over, and so furious their attacks, that in a short time the language of the original inhabitants, throughout the greatest portion of the island, whether Latin or British, was entirely extinguished; and, probably, in many instances, the inhabitants themselves were either exterminated or forced into exile. Therefore, in that portion of the country peopled by the Saxons, unless we except some few peculiarly favoured establishments, such as Glastonbury and St. Albans, and perhaps one or two others, we have no evidence of any remains of Roman learning having at all survived the general devastation; so that, unless we presume that some few embers might have been allowed to remain unquenched in these retirements, during the pagan domination of the Saxons, we must conclude that whatever of literature existed in England, during the reign of the Saxon monarchs, owed its origin to the introduction of Roman Ecclesiastics by Augustine; and in this case, Bede and Alcuin are the disciples of the Roman missionaries of the sixth century, and not the successors of the ancient British Clergy.

But however this may be, the Anglo-Saxons were actually making rapid progress towards establishing a national literature, properly and peculiarly their own; and had not their language suffered complete extirpation under the Norman dominion, it is highly probable that it would have by this time to boast of productions ranking amongst those of other cultivated nations. The Saxon Chronicle may be considered as a mark of the progress of literature; and the labours of Alfred, in promoting his native tongue, and the success with which he cultivated it, give ample proof of what Anglo-Saxon literature might have been, had that language been allowed to exist. But whatever these efforts might have produced, the positive evidence of facts compels us to admit, that nothing deserving the name of literature existed in the Saxon era, and that what little of a literary kind did exist, perished with the language, without leaving any permanent effect upon the people.

WALES.

WE now come to that secluded corner of the world, whose literature and traditions form the subject of the present Essay, the Principality of Wales, a country which, from the many extraordinary features in its history, stands alone amongst the nations of Europe. The Principality of Wales is the only portion of the Roman Empire that has retained its ancient language; it is the only country that successfully resisted the pagan Gothic invasion, and preserved its soil from being occupied and colonized by strangers; it is the only country that has preserved an indigenous literature unbroken from the earliest ages; and to add to this list of characteristics, Wales is the country that furnished the materials of thought to the awakening genius of Europe, and perhaps contributed much towards the impulse which occasioned that awakening out of sleep.

Whilst, according to the most probable conjecture, the eastern districts of this island became completely Romanized, and adopted the Latin language, it is most evident that the inhabitants of Wales resisted this foreign innovation with firmness and success; for, after a period of three hundred years of Roman domination, we find them, at the departure of that people, speaking their ancient and aboriginal language, if not as free from a mixture of Latin words, at least as unchanged in its grammatical construction, as if that people had never touched their soil. And this freedom from Roman influence is most evident in all their national characteristics: their poetry is peculiar to themselves, and bears not the remotest resemblance to that of the Romans; their legends are no more like those of Rome than of India; their superstitions, instead of partaking of the mythology of Rome, are purely indigenous; the very names of their chieftains, even during the stay of the legions here, as well as in subsequent ages, are as purely Welsh as if no foreign people had ever visited their shores.

But, as connected with the present subject, i. e. the literature of the race, they can produce undeniable proofs of having preserved a succession of compositions in their ancient

language from the sixth century down ; and many of those persons, who are best acquainted with their bardic compositions, are of opinion that some of their fragments belong to periods still earlier, and even to ages in which the Druidical religion prevailed, as they contain allusions, which it is supposed cannot refer to any other subjects than those connected with Druidism. But, however this may be, it is certain that there is not a century, from the sixth down to the present, of which the Welsh cannot produce some composition either in prose or verse ; so that this people stands in a very different position to the rest of the nations of Europe. For whilst all those nations had each a new language to form before they could lay the foundation of their literature, the Welsh had no such obstacle to contend with ; nor had they to pass through any state of transition from the use of an ancient to that of a modern tongue. And, in addition to this, the Welsh were the only people of Europe who successfully resisted the pagan Gothic invasions. The Saxons were never able to subjugate Wales, and the Danes could never even set foot in the country, except in marauding parties along the coast ; so that with regard to their proper national literature, the Welsh form a very striking exception to the rest of the nations of Europe.

When we direct our attention to the state of Classic learning in Wales, we may observe a strong similarity betwixt that and other countries. The Latin language will be found to be cultivated in the Colleges and Bangors of the Principality with a considerable degree of success ; but, at the same time, to be entirely confined to the Ecclesiastical profession. Amongst the cultivators of the Latin language in Wales, we may mention Gildas in the sixth century, Nennius in the eighth, and Asser Menevensis in the ninth. Whilst these, and perhaps many others in those seminaries, possessed a knowledge of the Latin so as to write it, if not with classic elegance, at least without any gross errors ; yet from several documents extant, it is evident that this knowledge had greatly declined in many parts of the country : as a confirmation of this, I need only refer to some of the ancient sepulchral inscriptions still to be seen, one of which I shall notice, as exhibiting that want of grammatical skill which

Gregory of Tours complains was so common in France. It is the following inscription upon a stone in Breconshire, which, from the form of the letters, must be of the sixth or seventh century.



CATACUS HIC JACIT
FILIUS TEGERNACUS

CATACUS HIC JACIT
FILIUS TEGERNACUS.

CATTOC LIES HERE
THE SON OF TEYRNOC.

It is evident that the composer of this inscription was unacquainted with the grammatical construction of the Latin, and of the necessity of employing the genitive case in the last word.

We have similar instances in the works of the Welsh Bards, where, occasionally, a Latin sentence is introduced, with the same ignorance or disregard of grammatical accuracy; and, sometimes, the Latin construction is entirely, and perhaps intentionally altered, in order to assimilate to the Welsh; as in the words *Rex Rexedd*, for *Rex Regum*, in which the Welsh plural termination is given instead of the Latin.

Also the ancient cross at Lantwit with;—

“In nomine Dei et filii et Speretus santi hanc crucem houel iprope-
trabit pro anima Res patres [patris] ejus.”

Also that of Samson at the same place ;—*

"In nomine dī summi incipit crux salvatoris quæ [quam] preparavit Samsoni apati [abbas] pro anima sua a pro anima Inthahelo io rex et Artmalo tecani [Decani]."

From the foregoing facts it is evident, that as far as regards modern Europe, with the exception of the Principality of Wales, prior to the twelfth century, either no national literature existed at all, or else, where it did exist, as among the Saxons of England, or the aborigines of Ireland, it became entirely extinguished in the general commotion,—the erection of new states, and the formation of new languages, which took place at that extraordinary epoch. It is therefore to this period that we are to look for the first dawn of modern literature ; and our next inquiry must be, In what form, and with what character of feature, did this new visitant appear on its first arrival. In order to enter into this investigation, we shall have to go over the same ground once more, and examine the state of the various nations of Europe at the commencement of their new era. As we have seen that the French nation holds the most prominent station, as to priority of rank and interest of matter, during the ages which preceded the twelfth century, so we shall find that she was the first that awoke out of sleep at the close of those dark ages.

FRANCE.

THAT the chronological precedence of literature must be conceded to France, will be placed beyond all possibility of dispute, when it is proved that the French language was in existence, and even furnished some specimens of composition, before any other of the modern languages of Europe was formed. And consequently it is to France that we are to look for the first outbreking of modern literature. And, truly, it is an employment of no ordinary interest, to inquire into the form and character which the newly awakened genius of Europe assumed ; and what the subjects were

* Engravings of these Crosses, from Drawings made by Mr. Price, may be found in a very interesting work, which bears the anomalous title of "The Icelandic MSS." published in 1848, at Llandoverly.—EDITOR.

which engaged the energies of the renovated mind. In the course of this investigation, a singular phenomenon will present itself to our notice, for we shall perceive that the materials of thought were not of the indigenous growth of the soil; nor were they the remains of the classic importations of Greece or Rome. But they were altogether furnished by a people, whose destinies had for ages consigned them to a state of obscurity in one or two secluded corners of the world, and whose native literature, from the exclusive nature of their language and habits, could scarcely be expected to exercise an influence beyond the narrow limits of their own territories. The earliest materials of thought were furnished by the Welsh. The first efforts of European genius were directed towards celebrating the ancient heroes of Wales;—Arthur and his fellow warriors were the subjects of composition, and the legendary traditions of the Welsh supplied the whole machinery of imagination; even the very scenes of action were laid within the territories of that people. And whilst *Arthur* and *Merlin* fixed the admiration as examples of valour and skill, *Carleon* and *Caerdigan*, *Carduel* and *Tintagel*, rose to a state of celebrity equal to that of the most distinguished cities.

As we have traced the first awakening of the European mind to the French nation, it now devolves upon us to inquire, in what part of France this phenomenon made its appearance. And after traversing the whole of that extensive region, we shall at length find our progress arrested within the province of Normandy: for it is amongst the *Trouvères* of that country that we find the earliest specimens of composition that can, with any degree of propriety, be admitted into the rank of literature. It is true, that claims of priority have been put in for the *Troubadours* of *Provence*, but evidently unsupported by facts; for no specimens of the Provençal can be produced of as early a date as some of undoubted authority of Roman composition. And indeed, when the almost established fact of the late introduction of the Provençal from Catalonia as a court language, is taken into consideration, it will afford a sufficient reply to any argument in favour of the claims of the *Troubadours*, unsupported as they are by ancient documents.

The earliest compositions, then, of Europe, which from their importance as a class, and their influence upon society, have any claim to the title of literature, are evidently those of the Roman Trouvères in the twelfth century, which were known under the names of *Fabliaux*, *Romances*, and *Lays*. The subjects of which were the exploits of chivalry, and of which the principal actors were the *Knights of the Round Table*.

It would be no easy task to determine upon the earliest specimen of Romantic composition amongst the French, or even upon the earliest composer of *Romances* or *Lays*; as the source of that species of composition, like that of many others, is enveloped in obscurity. However, at a particular period, we find such a constellation of authors, that we can speak with a certain degree of precision as to the age in which the genius of Romantic Fiction and popular literature began to manifest its power.

ROBERT WACE.

One of the earliest compositions of this description is the *Brut of Wace*, which was composed about the year 1155, and is a versified translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and, of course, is altogether made up of the history and traditions of Wales.

GEFFROY GAIMAR.

Another production of the same period is the history of the Saxon kings by Geffroy Gaimar, in which the author professes to have drawn his materials from the writings of the Welsh,—

“Solum les livres as Walleis
Kil avoient des Breton Reis.”

and again,—

“Geffun Gaimar cel livre escrit
Le translata e fes i mist
Ki li Walleis ourrent leissie
Kil avait ainz mult purchase
Ou fust a dreist ou fust a tort.”

CHRÉTIEN DE TROYES.

Soon after the appearance of the *Brut*, a number of eminent Trouvères and composers of Chivalrous Tales appeared

amongst the French, both in France and England, and amongst the most distinguished, may be ranked Chrétien de Troyes; but there is one remarkable difference betwixt his writings and those of his predecessors. Wace and Gaimar derive the materials of their Romances from the Brut, either that of Geoffrey of Monmouth or of Walter Calenius; but Chrétien de Troyes, although he takes the Knights of the Round Table for his heroes, yet relates adventures entirely distinct from those of the Brut, and introduces names which are not to be found in that work. This introduction of new matter might lead to a conclusion, that Chrétien de Troyes was the inventor of these tales, and that the new characters and adventures were altogether the creation of his own fancy. But, upon further examination, this supposition will appear to be altogether unfounded; for so far from his being the inventor, these names have long been held in veneration among the Welsh, as borne by some of their most distinguished warriors; and indeed, their history is so blended with that of the Welsh, that in many instances it is impossible to separate them. Therefore it is evident, that Chrétien de Troyes derived the materials of his Romances from the legends of the Welsh, but through what channel remains yet to be shewn.

MARIE OF FRANCE.

The twelfth century was the age of Romance: at this time the first impulse was given to the imagination, and as Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table formed the great and all engrossing subject of imaginative composition, so that powerful impulse continued not only unabated, but absolutely increasing in strength for many generations; and early in the thirteenth century we find the name of Marie de France amongst the most distinguished literary characters of the day. This extraordinary woman, like Chrétien de Troyes, whilst engaged in narrating the events of the Arthurian era, and celebrating the achievements of the heroes of the Round Table, yet introduces new matter into her compositions, and at the same time gives us to understand that it is not the production of her own fancy, but that she found it amongst the Lays of the Bretons. And

accordingly we find so much in it to connect it with Wales, that we can only regard Marie de France in the light in which she seems to place herself—that of a versifier and adapter of the ancient Welsh legends, with perhaps some few embellishments, such as would be necessary to give currency to those tales when transferred into a different language, and written for the entertainment of an age when some changes had already begun to take place in the habits of the world.

For many ages after the commencement of the thirteenth century, almost the whole of the popular literature of Europe consisted of Romances, either of the Round Table, or of some one of the cycles which succeeded to that style of composition. It was in this era of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, that the most striking productions made their appearance; and it was then the human mind received its present form and impression. There appear to have been, in the course of the world, certain eras in which sudden and powerful impressions have been made upon the moral and intellectual character, not to be effaced for many ages from that time; and this period assuredly was one. The mind at this time received a peculiar character, and, like metal from the forge, was tempered at once into that constitution which it has ever since been destined to retain. And as the Romances of Chivalry for so many ages formed the principal, if not the exclusive source of popular literature and entertainment; and as the legends of the Welsh furnished the entire supply of materials from which those Romances were constructed, it is not too much to assign to those legends a very prominent post in the formation of modern literature.

It would be but waste of time to enter into an examination of the several Romances which occupied the attention of Europe during this era, and ever afterwards formed a continuation to those of the Brut and the Fabliaux; the following catalogue will afford some idea of the extensive field occupied by these productions, and the powerful influence they must have exercised upon the public mind. The Romance of Merlin speaks for itself with regard to its Cymraeg origin. The San Graal, also, contains evidence of its being of the same school. Percival of Wales needs no

other proof of his Cambrian extraction, than the mere mention of his name. In a word, Lancelot of the Lake, Meliadus, Tristan, Isaye le Trist, Perceforest, and others of this cycle, evidently shew, in their construction, in the names of the several actors, as well as in the localities and incidents continually introduced, that the composers had only continued down that system which had been established by the early Trouvères.*

But as the institution of Chivalry is allowed to have had so powerful an effect upon the character of the nations, and as the Romances of Chivalry so greatly contributed towards promoting that institution, and directing the spirit of the times, the attention of the literary world has long been directed towards the investigation of the origin of those interesting compositions. And, accordingly, many laborious and learned works have been composed, both in England and on the Continent, upon the origin of Romantic Fiction. As might be expected in a subject of such intricacy, and especially, when for the first time brought under investigation, this gave rise almost to as many hypotheses as there were writers. Some have maintained the Saracenic origin of Romantic Fiction, through the medium of an intercourse with the Moors of Spain. Others, though maintaining the oriental origin, yet, have had recourse to different modes of importation, attributing this to the Crusades. Others, again, rejecting this explanation, have asserted that we are indebted altogether to the traditions of the Scandinavians for our legends of Romance, which they say were introduced by the Normans and other nations of the north; whilst a third party contend for that system which traces these legends to the province of Brittany and the Principality of Wales. With regard to the last of these systems, as it has been so repeatedly advocated in the course of this work, it will be needless to use any further arguments in its favour, in the present state of the inquiry; but, inasmuch as each of the others has had its supporters, it will be necessary to enter into some examination of their respective merits; otherwise it will be impossible to arrive at any conclusion upon the subject proposed for this Essay.

* See an account of these in Dunlop's History of Fiction.

THE ALLEGED SARACENIC ORIGIN OF
ROMANTIC FICTION.

It would be easy to expend much time and labour in confuting this theory, and the more so, as we should be throughout the whole contest employed in combating shadows which we should have to call up in succession for the sole purpose of dispelling them again. Therefore, in noticing this system, I shall only state, that not one single fact has been adduced in its confirmation, and that the whole rests upon the most vague and ungrounded assertion. If we consider the Moorish importation of the legends of Chivalry, through the intervention of Spain, we have only to ask, How the Moors of Granada came to introduce into the distant province of Normandy, the traditions of the Welsh? And if the same oriental origin should be contended for, on the ground of these legends having been imported by the Crusaders, still the same question thrusts itself forward, and until answered must for ever silence that claim. For whether the Moors of Spain or the Arabs of Syria, are held forth as the authors of the legends of Romance, we must always recur to the question, How did they abandon their own traditions in order to adopt those of the Welsh? How is it that neither Mahomet, nor Ali, nor Fatima, nor yet Rustan, or Jemsheed, have any place in these legends? and that neither Bagdad, nor Damascus, nor Granada, are at all named? But on the contrary, the heroes are the ancient warriors and chieftains of the Welsh—Arthur, and Owain, and Uther Pendragon; and the scenes of them are laid in Caerleon, and Caerdiff, and Camalot, and other places within the territories of the Welsh: names undoubtedly never known to the people of the East, until they were introduced along with the legends of Arthur, after those legends had become popular in Europe.

But while prosecuting this inquiry, and so decidedly asserting that there is not a single fact adduced to give the slightest support to the Asiatic system, it is but right to advert to one argument, which at first sight may appear to carry some weight. In examining the machinery of Romance,

it has been discovered that the word Fairy * bears so striking a resemblance to the Persian Peri, that an identity of origin must be strongly suspected. But if we consider the etymology of the English word, we shall find reason to be convinced that it has no connection whatever with the Persian. In the first place, this word is derived from the French, and in that language the original word is *Fée*, the termination *erie* being added in order to form another word *Féerie*, which does not signify a personage, but a state of existence. So that this divesting of the word of its termination, destroys all resemblance to the Persian, and leads us at once to the conclusion that this resemblance is a mere coincidence, and that it no more proves that *Fairy* is derived from *Peri*, than that it is, as many imagine, compounded from the English word *fair*, &c.

With the exception of this single word, I know of nothing that can be offered as containing even the shadow of an argument in favour of the Asiatic origin of Romance. In a word, Christian Chivalry is as different to any institution of Mahometanism, as the customs of Europe are to those of the East.

ALLEGED SCANDINAVIAN ORIGIN OF ROMANCE.

To those who maintain that the legends of Romance were introduced into Normandy by the Scandinavian settlers, the same answer may be given, comprised in the same question, viz. How came those Scandinavians to abandon their own native traditions, and adopt those of Wales or Brittany? But it is useless looking for a reply: there is not a trace of any Scandinavian tradition to be found in the legends of Chivalry. The demonology of Thor and Odin is as distinct from the Faery legends of Romance, as the latter are from the Mythology of Greece and Rome; and this Scandinavian claim, together with the evidence produced in its abrogation, brings under our notice a very singular fact, which is, that the traditions of Scandinavia, which must have been imported into France at the first settling of the Normans in that

* For some ingenious and satisfactory remarks upon the Origin of the word *Fairy*, vide "Keightley's Fairy Mythology" pp. 4—11. Bohn's Edition, 1850.—EDITOR.

country, never appear to have in any degree influenced the genius of the people in subsequent ages. That such traditions must have been imported, is a self evident fact. Thor and Odin, together with their kindred divinities, must have had their worshippers in Neustria; the heroes of the north must at one time have occupied a prominent station in the traditions of the people, whether as imaginary personages, or the real ancestors of those warriors who conquered the country; and the terrific and powerful Mythology of the Valhalla must have been transplanted there. But it rotted in the soil, without leaving a single off-set to record its existence.—So much for the claims of Scandinavia to the honour of having communicated to the world the materials of Romantic Fiction.

And now, having considered the progress of the ancient British legends in France, as far as the latter portion of the middle ages, when we find them still exercising an undiminished influence upon the public mind, though in the course of time new channels of thought were opened, and new actors and scenes were added to those already existing, yet the spirit of Chivalry and Romance was still the same, and Arthur and Merlin never lost the ascendancy which they had gained, it remains to follow this inquiry through the other nations of Europe.

ITALY.

As the Italian language is of so much later formation than that of France, so the literature of Italy, having the advantage of that already in a forward state of cultivation in its vicinity, had not to struggle against those difficulties to which, from its priority of origin, the other was subject. And though Dante* and his cotemporaries had almost to create the language in which they wrote, yet they had not to discover new ideas; these were already presented to them

* See Dante's *Rimini*, for the story of Lanciotto.

Mr. Price evidently intends here to refer to the "Inferno," Canto v. 103. &c. where, in the course of Francesca's fatal tale, the Romance of Sir Lancelot is alluded to:

"Noi leggevamo un giorno per diletto
Di Lancillotto, come amor lo strinse."

There is another reference to the same Romance in the "Paradiso," Canto xvi. 14.—EDITOR.

in a distinct and perfect state, in the Chivalrous Tales which at that time had become current throughout the world. That the Tales of the Round Table had extended themselves as far as Italy, even as early as the twelfth century, we have the evidence of Alain de Lisle, who, in speaking of Arthur, says that his name was celebrated even in Rome, "*Cantat gesta ejus domina civitatum Roma.*" And in the *Reali di Francia*, one of the earliest productions in the Italian language, and which is supposed to be of the thirteenth, or at least of the beginning of the fourteenth century, mention is made of Arthur, in such a way that it is evident his name was familiar to the author, though he affects to depreciate his achievements, and that possibly with a view to enhance the value of his own work. Speaking of Britain, he says:—

"Perchè vi era stato il re uter Pandragone ed il re artu* con molta bella baronia ; ma fecero poco per la fede di Cristo."

When the legends of Wales had found their way into Italy, although from the late formation of the Italian language, and the more general cultivation of the Latin as the language of literature, these legends were longer in obtaining universal reception in that country, than in France ; yet, we find that the charm which they possessed, at length not only effected their establishment there, but even gave them a degree of ascendancy ; or at least a very decided influence over the literature of the country. This we are assured of from the assertion of Boiardo, who wrote in the fifteenth century ; and in his *Orlando Innamorato* draws a comparison between the court of Arthur and that of Charlemagne, and gives a decided preference to the former, because the Knights of Arthur's court devoted themselves to love as well as to war ; whereas Charlemagne, though valiant and powerful in war, yet gave himself entirely to holy battles, and excluded love.

"Fu gloriosa Bretagna la grande
Una stagion per l'armi e per l'amore,
Onde ancor oggi il nome suo si spande,
Si che al Re Arture fa portare onore,

* It is possible the author's censure may have been called forth in consequence of Arthur's not having made war upon the Saracens, as Charlemagne and others of his own heroes had done.

Quando il buon cavaliere, a quel bande,
 Mostrarno in più battaglie il suo valore,
 Andando con lor dame in avventura,
 Ed or sua fama al nostro tempo dura,
 “ Re Carlo in Francia poi tenne gran Corte,
 Ma a quella prima non fu somigliante,
 Benchè assai fusse ancor robusto e forte,
 Ed avesse Rinaldo e'l Sir d'Anglante ;
 Perchè tenne ad Amor chiuse le porte,
 E sol si dette a le battaglie sante,
 Non fu di quel valore e quella stima,
 Qual fu quell' altra, ch'io contava in prima.
 “ Però che Amore è quel che da la gloria,
 E che fa l'uomo degno ed onorato,
 Amore e quel, che dona la vittoria,
 E dona ardire al cavaliere armato ;
 Onde mi piace di seguir l'istoria,
 Qual cominciai, d'Orlando innamorato, &c.”

This reference to the days of Arthur corresponds precisely with the declaration of the celebrated Court of Love in Provence, concerning the Code of Love, which was pretended to have been found by a Knight of Arthur's court, suspended from a tree by a gold chain. The foregoing extract from Boiardo establishes, beyond all doubt, the decided influence of the Welsh legends in Italy, and although the Romances of Charlemagne, which were then becoming popular, took precedence in furnishing the actors and subjects of Italian poetry, yet the spirit of the old Arthurian Romance was evidently perceptible throughout; and as the *Orlando Furioso* is but a continuation of the *Innamorato*, it is scarcely necessary to insist upon the fact of Ariosto's being indebted to the legends of Wales, like his predecessor, for much of that which gives a charm to his writings, although he does not avow it in the same manner. Indeed, it would not be difficult to shew, that however different the subject which he selected, yet even Tasso himself was strongly imbued with that peculiar feeling which was for the first time excited in the world by the Romances of the Round Table. And the same argument will apply in every instance in which poetry has been made the vehicle of chivalrous sentiment.

As an instance of the continued influence of the Welsh legends amongst the people of Italy, we may notice the name given to that beautiful optical illusion on the coast of Calabria, for it is called the *Fata Morgana* to this day. So

that this Island Færie has actually driven from their native soil, all the celebrated divinities and demi-gods who formerly displayed their power there.

SPAIN.

IN whatever form the elements of the Spanish language may have existed, subsequently to the Gothic invasion, it is clear that no specimen of it can be produced of earlier date than the twelfth, or perhaps the thirteenth century; so that in the general reveillé of Europe, Spain seems to have continued her sleep somewhat longer than the other nations. And as the Spanish language was formed at a later period than the French and the Italian, so it will be found that the style of literature first adopted, was that which was at the time current in the neighbouring states; even that species of Chivalrous Romance which had for its subject the exploits of Charlemagne and his Paladins.

One of the oldest specimens of the Spanish language is the Chronicle of the Cid, and the next to it is a poetical history of Alexander the Great. But as both these works are extremely tame and uninteresting, not having had any influence upon the literature of the country, they may now be regarded only as philological curiosities. Soon after the production of these works, another style of composition made its appearance in Spain, of a much more interesting character, in the Ballads and Poetical Narratives descriptive of the conflicts which the Spaniards had so long maintained with the Moors; and mixed up with these came the Romances of Chivalry. Indeed, the character of Romantic Fiction received a peculiar colouring in Spain, in consequence of this Moorish alliance. But, nevertheless, however great the influence of Moorish fiction, or however interesting the Narratives of Roland, and the Paladins, yet, it appears that the genius of Ancient British Romance was sufficiently powerful to take up a prominent position even in the heart of Spain. For when the most eminent author of that country, in the masterpiece of its literature, finishes one of his highest-wrought scenes, the principal actor is no other than Merlin the Enchanter; and the manner in which this personage is introduced,

strongly marks the ascendancy which the fictions connected with his history had acquired over those of other countries. For Cervantes, in the hunting scene, in which the disenchantment of Dulcinea is undertaken, after announcing the procession of six troops of enchanters, and introducing, with much necromatic pomp, the three great enchanters, Lirgandeo, Alguife and Arcalans, at last brings forward with vastly greater state, the chief of enchanters, Merlin himself, whom he makes to assume the title of Prince and Monarch of Magic, and the Depositary of Zoroastrian science, &c.

“ Yo soy Merlin, aquel que las historias
 Dicen que tuve por mi padre al diablo,
 [Mentira autorizada de los tiempos]
 Principe de la magica, y monarca
 Y archívo de la ciencia Zoroastrica,
 Emulo a las edades y a los siglos,
 Que solapar pretenden las hazañas
 De los andantes bravos caballeros,
 A quien yo tuve y tengo gran carino, &c.”

Indeed, Cervantes must have been deeply read in works of Romance, as the criticisms upon the library of *Don Quixotte* prove: for in reviewing those works which had been the means of leading the worthy knight into the strange delusion under which he laboured, the author shows such an intimate acquaintance with their contents, as well as with the names of the writers, that we must conclude that they had been to him, not only a source of amusement, but also a subject of study. And however interesting the Moorish traditions may be, and however liberally he may have supplied himself with materials for his work from that source, yet it is more than merely probable, that had it not been for the Romances of Chivalry, and especially for that peculiar spirit which they derive from the legends of Wales, the name of Cervantes would not have been known beyond the limits of his native country, and, possibly, would long ere this have sunk into oblivion even there.

Here, then, we have a decided proof of the influence of the Welsh legends on the literature of Spain. *Don Quixotte* may be seen in every house, and *Merlin* and his enchantments are as well known as the valiant knight himself.

The celebrity of the Principality of Wales as the birth-place of Romantic Fiction, is continually urged upon our

notice, in whatever portion of the Globe we make inquiry respecting this subject; and in the review of Don Quixotte's books, just alluded to, we have a strong confirmation of this fact. Because in the examination which these works undergo, the first that comes to hand is *Amadis of Gaul*, concerning which, one of the inquisitors remarks, that "he had heard that it was the first book of Chivalry printed in Spain." And as it has been clearly shewn by several writers upon the subject now under consideration, that the word *Gaul* was intended for *Wales*, i. e. *Galles*, the adoption of this title proves the important station which this Principality then held in the world of Chivalry and Romance.

PORTUGAL.

WHAT has been said respecting Spain, may be equally applied to Portugal, as far as regards the progress and influence of Romantic Fiction. But there is one circumstance connected with the importance attached to the Principality of Wales as the seat of Romance, which seems to have escaped the notice of commentators. In the above mentioned review of books, one of the volumes opened is *Palmerin of England*. One of the reviewers observes, "*it is said to have been composed by an ingenious King of Portugal.*" "*Es fama que le compuso un discreto rey de Portugal.*"—That the author of this Romance should have chosen England for the native land of his hero is easily accounted for, as well as his laying some of the scenes in Wales, &c. But even the name Palmerin is evidently Welsh, and is no other than Paulmerion, the British king, who is one of the ancestors of Vortigern, and the father of Glouida, who founded the city of Gloucester.

"Glouida filius Paulmerion. Ipse autem Glouida ædificavit urbem magnam super ripam fluminis Sabrinæ quæ vocatur Britannico sermone Cair Gloui."

GERMANY.

MADAME DE STÄEL says,—

"The present century [1700] gave birth to German literature :

* The Preface to "L'Allemagne" of Madame de Staël shows that work to have been first printed in the year 1810. In the 3rd Chapter of the 1st Part may be found her admirable sketch "Des Principales Epoques de la Littérature Allemande."—EDITOR.

prior to that period, the Germans had directed their attention very successfully to the sciences and metaphysics ; but their writings, which were more frequently in the Latin than in their native tongue, exhibited universally a want of originality of character."

This is a sweeping assertion, and evidently dictated under the influence of prejudice, and in a very exclusive acceptance of the term literature. For when we recollect that Luther translated the Bible into the German as early as 1534, and that since that time the native press of Germany has never remained idle, surely it is too much to deny to the people of Germany a native literature. But now comes the inquiry, "What influence have the Welsh legends had upon their literature, either in early or recent times?"—This question brings to light a very curious fact. Germany had its literature in the middle ages like the other nations of Europe, but it was in a dialect now obsolete ; for it is stated that in consequence of Luther's having made choice of the present German for his translation of the Bible, the old dialect gradually fell into disuse, and the works composed in it are no longer understood. But let us inquire what the nature of those compositions was, and what the style of thought. Here again the same extraordinary vision presents itself to our view,—Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. One of the most celebrated of these Romances, is the *Titarel* of *Wofraw von Eschenbach*, the subject of which is the quest of the *San Graal*, and the principal actors the Knights of Arthur's court. This Tale is avowedly taken from a Provençal Romance written by one Kyot or Guiot, which is now lost.* But whatever the Provençal edition might contain, the German exhibits a peculiar feature which has not hitherto been satisfactorily accounted for. Many of the names are evidently of an eastern origin: the names of the seven planets, for instance, are pure Arabic, as *Zwal* [*Zuhael*,] Saturn ; *Musteri*, Jupiter ; *Munet* [*Meryet*,] Mars ; *Samsi* [*Shems*,] the Sun ; *Alligasir* [the brilliant,] Venus ; *Kitr* [*Kedr*, the obscure,] Mercury ; *Kamer* [*Kæmer*,] the Moon. From these and other orientalisms, it has been concluded that the *Titarel* is altogether of Arabic origin, and this conclusion tends greatly to sanction the idea of the Arabic

* See Warton, 1824.

origin of Romance; but if the *Titurel* is really of Arabian origin, how in the name of the marvellous came it to contain the name of Arthur, and the warriors of Wales? I will venture to offer an explanation. This is the result of that importation of the Welsh legends into the East described by Alain de l'Isle.

“Quis inquam Arturum Britonem non loquatur, cum pene notior habeatur Asiaticis gentibus quam Britannis. Sicut nobis referunt Palmigeri nostri de orientis partibus redeuntes?—Loquuntur illum orientales, loquuntur occidui, &c.”

Who, I say, can be found that does not speak of Arthur the Briton? since he is almost better known to the nations of Asia, than to the Britons themselves, as our Palmers returning from the East declare. The inhabitants of the East and West speak of him, &c.

Amongst the eastern nations, the author mentions Egypt, the Bosphorus, Carthage, Antioch, Armenia, and Palestine. Now if all these nations celebrated the achievements of Arthur, doubtless they must have been acquainted with the legends of Wales; though in the recital of them it is natural to suppose, that many orientalisms would be introduced. Is it too much then to suppose that this *Titurel* is no other than an Arabian edition of the Welsh legend of the *San Graal*, translated into German?

In the *Lohengrin*, another German Romance, the same ancient British characters are introduced, and the same Welsh origin is distinctly manifested. Also Henry Von Veldeck, a minne-singer who lived in the twelfth century, mentions the name of Tristan in such a way as to make it evident that he was acquainted with his history.

It is not intended to deny that the Germans were possessed of works of fiction in their native tongue, at an early period, in which the subjects were taken from their own history, and the heroes of Gothic origin, as in the instances of “Dieterich of Bern,”* and “Siegfried;” but from the foregoing remarks, it is evident that the legends of Wales found their way into Germany very soon after their first appearance on the Continent, as popular fictions, in the twelfth century. And however they may, in after ages, have been blended with the native traditions of the country, or otherwise

* According to some he is Theodorice of Verona

modified according to the gradual changes which took place in the social habits of the people, yet it is certain that their influence never entirely ceased to be felt in the more exalted departments of literature, and perhaps some distorted remnants may still be discernible in the *Diablerie* of modern Germany.*

* In further illustration of this part of his subject, Mr. Price quotes the following extract from *The Athenæum* of February 17, 1844.

"*Griselda: a Dramatic Poem.* Translated from the German of F. Halm, by Q. E. D. Smith, Elder and Co.

"We have here the old Chaucerian, and Petrarchian, and Boccaccian story of the patient *Griselda* recast, and set in the age of Arthur and his knights, with every romantic appliance that a poetic fancy can bring into play and bearing on an attractive theme. Perhaps there is no reader of poetry who has not felt the want of adequate motive for the conduct of her despotic lord, as an important drawback from the satisfaction to be derived from *Griselda's* pathetic story. Friedrich Halm has contrived to supply the want in a manner equally ingenious and pleasing.

"He presents us, in the first act, with King Arthur's court in the city of Caerleon. In a richly adorned and brightly illuminated saloon, at a royal festival, Arthur, with his knights and ladies gorgeously attired, attended by servants, and pages, and seneschal, disport themselves in feast and converse, making love, doing the gallant, and uttering jests of infinite variety. There, too, are Tristan the Wise, and Percival of Wales. The latter is the husband of *Griselda*. Lancelot has whispered his soft nothings in the year of the Queen *Ginevra*, and her maids of honour have frankly accepted the amorous offers of chivalric lovers, when her majesty's attention is attracted towards the person of Percival, who scornful as it would seem to grace by courtly dress the festal occasion, is rudely attired in bearskin. To her questions, she receives for information, that "since home he led his bride, he has passed three years in forest solitudes." The queen's curiosity is raised about the lady, of whom nothing is known; whereupon follows a scene which we would willingly, but for its length, extract, in which Percival tells his whole course of wooing. Happening to say, while praising his wife,—

I have seen many women, ne'er a better,
What matter, if she be a collier's child,
Or have the blood of nobles in her veins?—

the suggestion of her being "a collier's child," so tickles the fancy of the queen and her maidens, that they frequently interrupt his story, to have their joke aside, and then returning to him, beg him to proceed. This conduct naturally irritates Percival; he is evidently being laughed at, and his rising passion prompts him to resent it. Lancelot demands satisfaction for the insult done to the queen, and the court is all in confusion, when Arthur re-enters. The magnanimous monarch wishes to hold evenly the balance of justice; but though he perceives plainly enough that "forgiveness on either side is needless," yet he cannot help feeling that "the crown demands atonement." This, however, Percival refuses to make, by retracting his words. Meanwhile the queen is boiling over with wrath and indignation, but at last is reduced to calmness by a sudden scheme of subtle malice which she conceives. This part of the scene we must extract. Arthur says—

'Only recall thy words!

Per.
Never!

Recall them! No!

K. Arthur. Now, by my oath, thou shalt recall them!

Per. And, by my oath, the heavens shall sooner fall.

Gin. (after some minutes' thought.)

My lord and king, permit me! Let her hand

Who tied the tangled knot, unloose it now!

You shall not, Percival, recall your words,

And I will kneel before the collier's child.

SCANDINAVIA.

REMOVED as the nations of the Baltic were from any literary intercourse with the more cultivated people of the South, and living under the hereditary dominion of their own gloomy but powerful superstitions, it would appear absurd to expect to find amongst them any of those legendary productions, which have for their object the celebrating of the heroes of more Southern extraction. But here again, should we reason in this manner, we should find ourselves mistaken; for into Scandinavia itself, the Empire of the terrific demons of the *Eddas* and the *Sagas*, we shall find that Arthur and his Knights found their way, and even disputed the dominion with Odin himself. We are told that in the year 1226, the whole story of

Per. What is't you say?

Lancelot.

Incredible!

Ellinor.

She raves!

K. Arthur. Ginevra, are you jesting?

Ginevra.

Hear me out!

I kneel, Sir Knight, before the collier's child,
If you can prove your wife to be indeed
So virtuous, so faithful, and so tender,
So to yourself and to your will submit,
That, were rank measured by desert alone,
She were the queen, and wore the crown of England.
If you prove this, then will I kneel before her.

Per. You will!

Gin. I will, I will!

K. Arthur. Sir Percival,

Should dubious contest thus decide a strife
Which one repentant word might end with ease?

Per. (hastily.) What are the proofs then, Queen, which you demand?

Gin. First I require that from your wife you ask

Her child, her son, feigning to give him up
To your liege lord, who reprobates your choice,
Disowns its offspring, and if you refuse,
Threatens the Church's thunders on your head.

Per. She loves her child, loves it with all her heart,
But me she loves yet more! She'd give her life,
She'd give her child for me! Recall my words?
What farther, Queen?

Gin.

And farther, Sir, I ask,

That in the sight of your assembled vassals,
In open presence, you cast out your wife,
And send her from you—poor, forlorn, and naked;
As poor, forlorn, and naked, you received her.

Per. And farther, Queen?

Gin.

But she, how deep soe'er

The blows you strike may sink into her heart,
She in her bosom shall retain for you
The same affection, nor exchange her love
For hate, her patient sweetness of endurance
For bitterness, but in her deepest grief,
Shall cling to you with more devoted love
Than when you first embraced her as a bride.

Per. And then?

Gin.

Then kneels Ginevra to Griselda!

But if she fail, if from the fiery trial
She come not forth unchanged as purest gold,
Then at my feet Sir Percival must kneel!

Per. Sooner the north pole shall the south pole kiss!

Percival, however, accepts the challenge; and the action of the play commences."

Tristan and Yseult was translated into the Norse, (Norwegian or Icelandic,) under the title of "*Saga af Tristrand og Isaldis*."

GREECE.

THERE is in the Greek language a Poem of the middle age, supposed to be of the twelfth century, (the present copy being of the thirteenth or fourteenth, in the Vatican,) in which the Knights of the Round Table are the heroes.—

Arthur is called *Αρτουζος*, Gwalchmai *Γαουλβανος*, Gwen-
over *Ντζενεβρα*, Uther Pendragon *Ουτερωπαντραγορος*.

The verse is a species of heroic metre.—It contains 306 lines.

This Poem begins as follows.—

Νέοι, παιδίσκαι, σὺν αὐτοῖς, μητέρες εὐτεκνούσαι,
Καὶ ῥήγες ὑποκείμενοι, ῥῆγὶ τῷ Βρετανίας,
Ἐώρων ἐκπληττόμενοι, τὸ θάρσος του πρεσβύτου,
Τὸ κάλλος δ' ἐπεθαύμαζον, τῆς ἐπελθούσης κόρης.*

TRANSLATION BY THE EDITOR OF TRISTAN.

"Adolescentes, virgines, cum iisque matres puerperæ,
Regesque, qui parebant regi Britanniaë,
Spectabant admirantes audaciam senis,
Simulque venustatem admirabantur virginis, quæ advenerat."

FARTHER ON THE FOLLOWING OCCURS.

Ὁ δὲ πρεσβυτῆς εἰρηκεν, χαιρε μοι, Γαουλβανε,
Ὁ του ρηγος ἀδελφιδους, Αρτουζου Βρετανίας,
Ἀλλ ἀπιθι, μακρυνθεθι, μὴ μου προψαυσης ὁλως.
Ὁμολογῶ τας χαριτας, μετερι σου Μοργαινῇ
Καὶ παππῳ σου τῷ θαυμαστῷ, ρηγὶ τῷ Βρετανίας,
Τῇν κλησιν ἐπιφεροντι, Ουτερωπαντραγορου.

"Tum senex, salve ait, Galbane,
Regis illius nepos Arturi Britanniaë.
Sed abeas, abscedas longe, omnino ne me tangas,
Grates enim confiteor me habere matri tuæ Morganaë,
Atque avo tuo admirabili regi Britannæ,
Qui nomen gerebat Uteropandragoraë."†

This Greek Romance appears to be only a fragment, the beginning being wanting. The first lines seem only a portion

* Var. 2 line *ρηγες*—3 *ορωντες*.

† From Tristan, an old French Romance, published by Francisque Michel, printed in London, by Pickering 1835, 2 vols. 12mo.

tion of some foregoing story; they describe an oldman armed as a knight, and with him a beautiful young woman, neither of whose names is mentioned. The old knight is attacked by Palamedes, and overthrows him immediately. He is then successively attacked by Gaolbanos, *Ἀνδρείος Γαουλβανος*, the brave Gawain; *Ο Γαλαιωτος ο κλεινος*, the illustrious Galeote; *κλειχος εκ λιμνης Λανσελωτος*, the illustrious Lancelot of the Lake; and *ο στερεος Τριστανος*, the valiant Tristan, and the old knight unhorses them all. At length Arthur himself, looking pale with rage, and gnashing his teeth, *Ο ρηξ ωχρουνται προσωπον και βρυχει τους οδοντας*, orders his arms to be brought, and goes out to encounter the old knight, notwithstanding the entreaties of Gwenever; but the old man, instead of standing his attack, dismounts and pays him homage. Then he is honourably feasted amongst the Knights of the Round Table, *τραπεζη της στρογγυλης*, and after some other victories, he departs to his own country, and the maid is also allowed to return home.

BRITAIN.

WHETHER it was through the sole instrumentality of the French Trouvères, or the conjoint operation of the British Bards, the ancient legends of Wales were, at a very early period, adopted by the Anglo-Norman population of England; but, inasmuch as many of those Trouvères were actually of English birth, though still using the Norman language, it would be but a useless repetition to notice fictions of Chivalry and Romance, of which they were the authors, and for the materials of which they had recourse to the traditions of the Welsh. We shall therefore proceed to consider those compositions which may be strictly denominated English; and amongst the earliest of these is the work of Thomas the Rhymer, or Thomas of Ereildoune, well known as the Romance of Sir Tristram, which is, according to the latest date assigned to it, as early as 1250, and according to some, much earlier. But as this work has been published by Sir Walter Scott, together with a learned dissertation, it will be needless here to add any remark, further

than to state, that the subject of that Romance is purely Welsh, and that the whole is precisely of the same school with the Romances of Chivalry.

From the decline of the Norman language to the formation of the present English, there was a chasm in the popular literature of the country. Notwithstanding the Latin writers of that period did, in many instances, dwell with an apparent feeling of interest upon the ancient traditions of Britain, yet the language in which they wrote being confined to the monasteries, their compositions can scarcely be considered to come within the design of the present Essay. When the English language in its present form began to be cultivated, then immediately the legends of the Welsh asserted that ascendancy amongst the modern English, that they had long before enjoyed over their Anglo-Norman ancestors; and accordingly a number of the old Romances began to make their appearance in an English garb; and the Knights of the Round Table once more occupied their proper station in the Island of Britain.

When the art of printing began to be exercised in England, these Romances were among the first productions of the press; and as the popularity which they enjoyed rendered them a source of emolument to their publishers, so on the other hand, the numbers that were issued contributed greatly to form the public taste, and to constitute that style of literature which for several ages prevailed in this country, and to the present day has never ceased to exist.

One of the most complete works of the Arthurian Cycle is the "*Morte d' Arthur*," compiled by Sir Thomas Maelor, (Malory or Mailorie,) from the old French Romances. This work, which is in English, was finished in the year 1470, and printed by Caxton in 1485, and afterwards became very popular. This work has incurred the censure of the learned Ascham, who inveighs against it in the most unqualified terms, and condemns both it and all its kindred compositions, for the licentiousness of manners which they describe. This censure, though severe, is certainly just and well merited. The laxity of morals shows an exceedingly depraved state of society at the time these works were composed, and the introduction of such topics, doubtless, did not

tend to diminish the evil. But this unmitigated condemnation comes rather awkwardly from such a man as Ascham, whose life was devoted to the study of the Greek and Roman classics. The Romances of the middle ages are certainly reprehensible enough, but they are purity itself compared with the abominations of Greece and Rome.

Amongst the cultivators of the English language it would be impossible to pass by "the father of English poetry" unnoticed, and in looking at the works of Chaucer, we cannot fail to perceive in them evident proofs of the influence of the fictions of chivalry of the early school; sometimes the ancient British knights are distinctly named, and throughout his writings we see traces of his acquaintance with the Norman Trouvères.

The influence of these legends is still more discernible in the writings of Spenser, who seems to have had his taste altogether modelled after the design of those old Romancers, and the very title of his Poem "The Faerie Queen," speaks a pupil of the Arthurian school.

In Shakspeare too we find evidences of acquaintance with the same Romances and traditions. "King Lear" is altogether an ancient British story. "Cymbeline, King of Britain," speaks for itself. "The dreamer Merlin and his prophecies," the moldwarp and the ant, the dragon and the finless fish, the clip-winged griffin and the molten raven, &c. all conspire to prove the currency of these Welsh superstitions, and the effect they had upon the literature of the country when Shakspeare wrote.

But this influence did not terminate with Spenser and Shakspeare, for we find that the mind of Milton was so completely imbued with the spirit of the Arthurian Romance, that it is said he once meditated making Arthur the subject of the Epic Poem which he had in contemplation; and his acquaintance with the subject is clearly shewn in several passages in the *Paradise Lost*, and other works; as

"———What resounds,
In fable or romance of Uther's Son,
Begirt with British and Armoric knights."

* *Paradise Lost*, Book I. 579—81. See also Milton's Epistle to Giovanni Battista Manso; and his "*History of Britain*," Book III.—Editor.

DRYDEN.

Dryden felt the power of the Arthurian Romances, and wrote a play upon an imaginary topic, called "Arthur," in which that monarch is the Hero, and Merlin a principal actor: Arthur and the Britons being engaged in war with Oswald, King of Kent. It is a kind of mixed English Opera, the music by Purcel.—This piece was brought forward with great splendour by Macready, in November, 1842.

As we descend still lower, and nearer our own times, we shall find the same influence prevailing. Parnell has shewn that he was fully sensible of the effect of this style of fiction, in that beautiful tale, commencing,

"In Britain's Isle and Arthur's days,
When midnight Fairies danced the maze, &c."

And although the Fairies of Parnell's time had greatly diminished in size, and undergone many changes in their habits, yet his referring the occurrence which formed the subject of his tale to the days of Arthur, plainly shews the impression which the Arthurian Fictions had left in the country.

Almost every writer of imagination has shewn not only an acquaintance with the subject, but oftentimes indicated an acknowledgement of the powerful nature of that style of thought. And few as are the compositions of Gray, yet even he does not pass this subject unnoticed, as may be seen in the Bard,—

"No more our long lost Arthur we bewail, &c."

The touches of Gray's pencil, though strong and brilliant, and finished, yet are but touches; and it is only from some short expressions of this kind, that we can form an idea of the nature of those ideas which made the strongest impression on his mind; yet, from his connecting the re-appearance of Arthur with visions of glory, described by the Bard as descending from the height of Snowdon, and unfolding themselves to his aching sight, we may infer that Gray was not insensible to the charm of the Arthurian traditions.

But to bring this series of proofs immediately to the time we live in, we may adduce another instance of the influence of the ancient British legends, in the writings of Sir Walter

Scott. This great man was a true patriot ; he never forgot his native country, and when proceeding in the full career of genius, bent upon the celebration of some foreign achievement, he never failed to step out of his way, at one period or other, in order to introduce some incident to the honour of Scotland. But Scott's imagination had been trained in the school of the Arthurian Romance ; and no one but a perfect master of that style could have produced *The Bridal of Triermain*. Even in this, the nationality of the author afforded a means of gratification, and "*Reged wide and fair Strathclyde*," were within the precincts of that favoured district, to which his heart was so devoted.*

To the foregoing list of poetical writers, we may add the many learned disquisitions which this subject has given rise to in different nations.—On the continent Legrand, De la Rue, Grimm, and others ; and in Britain, Bishop Percy, Warton, Ritson, Ellis, Way, Scott, and many other learned and able writers have turned their attention to the investigation of this subject. When we add to this, the talents that have been employed in arranging these fictions in a dramatic form, and the interest which has been excited by their representation amongst persons of taste and intellectual cultivation, we are under the necessity of admitting, that even to the present moment, the legends of the Welsh continue to exercise a decided influence upon the literature of Europe.

Having thus far prosecuted this inquiry, and established the fact, that throughout the whole of modern Europe the earliest species of imaginative composition was based upon certain traditions, foreign to those nations by which they were adopted ; and having maintained that those traditions originally emanated from Wales, it now remains to confirm that statement by a reference to the Welsh authorities, and to produce some of the most eminent of the originals referred to. We shall commence the series with *Arthŭr* himself.

ARTHUR KING OF BRITAIN.

This extraordinary being, who once filled the whole civilised world with his fame, "whose sword reached from Scandina-

* Another instance was added to this list, during the last year of Mr. Price's life, by Sir E. B. Lytton's Epic Poem, called "*King Arthur*."—EDITOR.

avia to Spain," and whose very name is still borne amongst the most aristocratic of the age; this exalted personage, the object of universal admiration, has met with the unaccountable fate of having even his very existence absolutely denied. His Cambrian countrymen, it is true, urge the authority of their ancient documents in proof of the truth of his having once led their forefathers to victory, but the authenticity of these documents is also denied; and so there remains little more to be done, than for each party to rest content with their respective opinions, as it is not probable that much more light can be thrown upon the subject. But as Arthur occupies so exalted a station in the ancient works of fiction, which form the subject of this Essay, it becomes necessary, at least, to shew the existence of those traditions among the Welsh, prior to their adoption by the nations of the continent.

The authenticity of the ancient Welsh documents respecting the achievements of Arthur having been called in question, as the object of this Essay is not to prove the truth of that history, but rather to shew the ancient British origin of those legends, it will not be necessary here to enter into any defence of them as authentic records, but merely to shew, that they had their origin among the Welsh, and that they were from Britain transplanted among the continental nations.

One of the earliest documents of undeniable antiquity, in which the name of Arthur is found, is the work of Nennius. Even the genuineness of this work was for a long time doubted, and many expressed a strong conviction that the passages in question were late interpolations; but this dispute has been set at rest by the publication of the Vatican copy of Nennius, by Gunn. In this copy the disputed passages are found. And as the manuscript is universally admitted to be of the tenth century, the alleged interpolations are of course disproved. It contains the original history of Nennius rewritten by Mark the Hermit, in the year 945. The account of Arthur commences as follows:—

"Tunc belliger Arthur cum militibus brytanniæ, atque regibus contra illos pugnabat. Et licet multi ipso nobiliores essent, ipse tamen duodecies dux belli fuit, victorque bellorum. Primum bellum contra illos inivit juxta hostium fluminis quod dicitur gleis. Secundum et tertium, &c."

The writer then enumerates briefly the battles of Arthur, giving the names of the places where they were fought, and, with the exception of the incredible number which Arthur is said to have slain with his own hand, there is nothing in this account to give it a character so marvellous as to excite suspicion of its truth. This last battle is mentioned as follows :—

“Duodecimum contra saxones durissime Arthur bellum in monte badonis penetravit, in quo corruerant impetu illius una dcccc, xl. viri nullo sibi britonum in adiutorium adherente, preter ipsum solum, domino se confortante.”

The battle of Badon Mount is also mentioned by Gildas, although the name of Arthur is not found in his work.

Now, as the above account of Arthur is found in a manuscript so old as to place the subject beyond all suspicion of modern or middle-age forgery, surely it is very unreasonable to deny the existence of this monarch, or to maintain the spuriousness of all the native traditions respecting him.

But be the Welsh traditions authentic or fabulary, it is evident, that as early as the twelfth century, the fame of Arthur had extended itself over the whole civilised world in a most extraordinary manner, as we learn from the work of Alain de l'Isle, or Alanus de Insulis, whose death took place in the year 1181. His description of the celebrity of Arthur is as follows :—

“Quo enim Arturi Britonis nomen fama non volans non pertulit et vulgavit. Quousque Christianum pertingit imperium?—Quis, inquam Arturum Britonem non loquator, cum pené notior habeatur Asiaticis gentibus quam Britannis, sicut nobis referunt Palmigeri nostri de orientis partibus redeuntes. Loquuntur illum orientales, loquuntur occidui toto terrarum orbe divisi. Loquitur illum Ægyptus, Bosforus exclusa non tacet. Cantat gesta ejus domina civitatum Roma, nec emulam quondam ejus Carthaginem Arturi prælia latent. Celebrat actus ejus Antiochia, Armenia, Palæstina.”

“To what region, as far as the Christian religion has extended, has fame not carried and published the name of Arthur the Briton? Who, I say, does not speak of Arthur the Briton? since he is almost better known among the nations of Asia than among the Britons themselves, as our Pilgrims returning from the East declare. Both the East and West speak of him, though separated by the extent of the whole world. Egypt speaks of him, and the Bosphorus is not silent. Rome, the mistress of cities, sings his exploits; nor are the battles of Arthur unknown even to her former rival, Carthage. Antioch, Armenia, and Paelstine, celebrate his achievements.”

The rapidity with which the fame of Arthur was borne to these distant regions, is as unaccountable as it is unique in the history of the world. Alain de l'Isle died in 1181, and therefore it is reasonable to suppose that this extension of the fame of Arthur had been effected many years before his death, in order to allow for the return of the Pilgrims and others, who brought intelligence of the fact. And although Geoffrey of Monmouth's work was known on the continent before the year 1139, yet it may be supposed it had not acquired a very general circulation for some years after; so that the time allowed for this universal spread of Arthur's fame must have been but very inconsiderable. And it is probable that it was not much known previous to the publication of the Brut by Wace, in 1155, which reduces the term to a still shorter space.

Amongst the fictions connected with the history of Arthur, there are two of a very striking nature: his first acquaintance with his title to the throne, and his mortal wound on the field of Camlan; and I shall notice them here, merely as specimens of fiction: they are given in the *Morte Arthur*.

After the death of Uther Pendragon, the throne of Britain remained sometime without an occupant. Arthur, the son of Uther, having been reared by a nobleman in the country, and kept in ignorance of his parentage, according to the counsel of Merlin; but the nobility having assembled for the purpose of selecting a Sovereign, there was seen near the place of assembly a large block of marble, with a sword stuck fast in it, with an inscription, stating that whoever should draw out that sword was the rightful heir to the throne. After all the aspirants had tried their strength, and failed to move the sword, Arthur came, though ignorant of the importance attached to the act, and drew out the sword without difficulty, in consequence of which he was proclaimed King.

The other occurrence is that which is related as having taken place at the fatal battle of Camlan. Arthur, finding himself mortally wounded, gave his sword, Caliburn, to Bedwyr, one of his knights, and desired him to take it to the border of a certain lake, and throw it in. Bedwyr took the sword, but when about to throw it into the lake, he was

so much taken with its appearance that he could not make up his mind to dispose of so beautiful and valuable a weapon in that manner, he therefore hid it, and returned to Arthur; and on being questioned by Arthur as to what he saw when he flung the sword into the lake, he said he saw nothing but the waves, upon which Arthur accused him of deceiving him. On his again going to perform the same duty, and again returning in the same manner, Arthur became exceedingly enraged, and ordered him in the most peremptory manner to perform his commands. Bedwyr this time went and stood on the margin of the lake, and taking the sword in his hand, he flung it with all his might into the lake; and as it was descending, a hand and arm came up out of the water and caught it by the hilt, and, brandishing it three times, descended with it into the lake. When Bedwyr returned and related what he had seen, Arthur was satisfied, and desired Bedwyr to convey him to the lake, which when he did, they saw there "a little barge with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods, and they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur." It is also said, that among these ladies were three queens, "one was king Arthur's sister, Morgan le Fai, the other was the queen of North galis, and the third was the queen of the Waste Lands; and there was Nimue, the chief Lady of the Lake, which had wedded Sir Pelleas, the good knight." Arthur desired Bedwyr to assist him into the barge, and they rowed off to the Island of Avalon.

The belief in this disappearance of Arthur after receiving his mortal wound in the battle of Camlan, and of his re-appearance to lead the Britons to victory, was very general among the Welsh at an early period. Alanus de Insulis mentions it as firmly credited in Brittany; and William of Malmsbury, who died in 1143, has the same remark concerning this country.

"Sed Arthuri sepulchrum nusquam visitur; unde antiquitas neni-arum adhuc eum venturum fabulatur."

"But the grave of Arthur is nowhere seen, where ancient tales fable him yet to come."

This expression, *ancient fables*, shews that the superstition

was much older than the time of Geoffrey of Monmouth; and it precisely accords with what is said concerning the grave of Arthur, in those ancient stanzas, called The Memorials of the Graves of the Warriors, which are preserved in the Welsh language, and in which the places of sepulture of many of the chieftains and warriors of Britain are recorded :—

“Bedd y March bedd y Gwythyr
Bedd y Gwgawn Gleddfrudd
Anoeth bydd bedd y Arthur.”

The grave of March [ap Meirchion] : the grave of
Gwythyr [ap Greidiol] :
The grave of Gwgawn Gleddfrudd :
Unknown is the grave of Arthur.

The three persons first named were knights of Arthur's court; the one is King Mark, the second was the father of Queen Gwenhwyvar. Among the Triads, there is one containing the following stanza, which is said to have been composed by Arthur.

“Sef ynt fy nhri chadfarchawg
Mael Hir a Llyr Lluyddawg
A cholofn Cymru Caradawg.”

Lo, these are my three knights of battle,
Mael the Tall and Llyr Lluyddawg,
And the pillar of Wales, Caradoc.

MERLIN.

Although now so obscured by fiction, there seems to have been such a character as Merlin, who, by the Welsh, is called Myrddin Emrys, and in the Latin, Merlinus Ambrosius : the change of the *dd* into *l*, clearly indicating a Latin alteration from the British original, as the Welsh *dd* is pronounced like the soft *th* in *the* and *that*; and as neither the French nor the Latin possessed that sound, the *l* was chosen as being something similar; according as we find in many other names in Geoffrey of Monmouth, and other writers both Latin and French.

This Merlinus Ambrosius is the person whose name is connected with the Arthurian Tales, as an eminent magician. There was another Merlin, who lived nearly a century later,

who is called *Merlinus Sylvestris*, and *Merlinus Caledonius*; and in the Welsh he is called *Myrddin Wyllt*, and *Myrddin ap Morfryn*, that is, the son of *Morfryn*. This person was also considered a prophet, and there are several pieces attributed to him still extant, some of which are, allowing for a few interpolations, undoubtedly genuine. This *Merlin Sylvestris* resided at the Court of *Gwentolew*, one of the princes of the district of *Strathelyde*; and in consequence of the defeat and death of his patron in the battle of *Arderyth*, he became an exile and retired to the *Caledonian wood*, from which he received the appellation of *Caledonius*, as it is said that from having seen a terrific vision in the air he lost his reason, and lived in a wild and savage manner in that wood, and received the name of *Sylvestris*. Before his reverse of fortune, he appears to have been a person of rank, as we may gather from his own expressions

“*Ac yn ngwaith Arderydd oedd aur fy ngorddorch.*”

“And in the battle of *Arderyth* I wore the golden torques.”

There are no remains of *Merlin Ambrosius* extant in the Welsh language, and those prophecies in *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, are, of course, out of the question. But the identity of names has caused these two characters to be so blended, as to form one great magician and prophet, under the name of *Merlin*.*

However this fame may have been acquired, it is certain, that next to *Arthur* himself, no individual has had such an extraordinary celebrity throughout the world, as his great counsellor *Merlin*. In addition to what has been said already upon the influence of the *Arthurian Romance* upon literature, as an aggregate of legendary tales, it may be added that *Merlin*, in particular, has individually contributed towards that influence in an extraordinary degree. *Alanus de Insulis* was so struck with the prophecy of *Merlin* in *Geoffrey of Monmouth's* work, that he actually wrote a commentary upon it, explaining every sentence in regular order; and in the reign of *Charles the first*, the same Latin

* See p. 138, &c.

prophecies of Merlin were translated into English verse, and published by Thomas Heywood with a similar commentary, applying the predictions to the events of that time. The commencement is as follows ;—

“Woe’s me for the red Dragon, for alach,
the time is come, he hasteth to his mach,
the bloody Serpent ! yet whose souls are white
Implies that nation on which they delight, &c.”

This alludes to the battle of the Red and White Dragon mentioned in Geoffrey of Monmouth. The original is

“*Væ rubeo Draconi ! nam exterminatio ejus festinat, &c.*”

The Red Dragon represented the Welsh nation, and was worn by Owen Glyndwr in his armorial bearings, and also by Henry VII. and there are many recollections connected with that emblem, which hardly come within the design of the present Essay.

With regard to the real existence of Merlin, however the fablers of successive ages may have thrown a doubt over it, yet there are a few circumstances which lead us to suppose that such a person actually existed ; for instead of consigning him to a state of enchantment in a thorn brake, the ancient remains preserved in the Welsh language speak of his grave, and even point out the spot ;

“*Bedd anap llian yn Neweis
Fynydd llugor llew Emreis
Prif ddewin Merddin Emreis.*”

“The grave of Anap lleian* is in the mountain of Eweis, the leader of the hosts of Emreis—the chief magician, Merddin Emreis.”

This stanza, from its antiquity, and obsolete and defective orthography, is very obscure ; but it distinctly mentions the grave of Merlin being upon a mountain.

SIR GAWAIN.

The Sir Gawain of the English Romances, and Govein of the French, is no other than the Welsh Gwalchmai, first of all Latinised into Walganus, and then reduced to Walwein.

* A name given to Merlin.

This knight is well known in Welsh writings as Gwalchmai, the Son of Gwyar; but as the literature of Wales scarcely comes within the scope of this Essay, inasmuch as it is continually referred to as the origin from whence these materials were drawn, I shall only mention, that in addition to the station which Govein occupies in the Romances of Europe, William of Malmesbury says, that his grave existed in his time, in Pembrokeshire.

"Tunc in provincia Walliarum quæ Ross vocatur muentum est sepulchrum Walwini qui fuit haud degener Arturi ex sorore nepos, &c." *

There is still a place in that county, called in Welsh, Castell Gwalchmai, and in English, Walwyn's Castle; and not far off is the chapel of St. Gofan. This sepulchre of Gwalchmai was on the sea shore; and in confirmation of the fact, there is a Welsh stanza commemorating his grave, which speaks of its being so situated:

"Bedd Gwalchmai yn Pyton
Yd dilyf y dy neutron."

"The grave of Gwalchmai is in Pyton, where slowly flows the ninth wave."

It would not be difficult to identify the knights of Romance generally, with the ancient warriors of the Welsh, together with many other characters and events of the early Arthurian cycles. But as many of these have been already pointed out in various dissertations, I shall now merely notice a few identities which seem to have escaped the observation of those who have written upon this subject; and as Arthur

* Dr. Giles in his Translation of William of Malmesbury's "Chronicle," Book III. A.D. 1087, renders the passage above referred to as follows: "At that time, in a province of Wales called Ros, was found the sepulchre of Walwin, the noble nephew of Arthur; he reigned, a most renowned knight, in that part of Britain which is still called Walwerth; but was driven from his kingdom by the brother and nephew of Hengist, though not without first making them pay dearly for his expulsion. He deservedly shared with his uncle, the praise of retarding for many years the calamity of his falling country. The sepulchre of Arthur is nowhere to be seen, whence ancient ballads fable that he is still to come. But the tomb of the other, as I have suggested, was found in the time of king William, on the sea-coast, 14 feet long: there, as some relate, he was wounded by his enemies, and suffered shipwreck; others say, he was killed by his subjects at a public entertainment. The truth, consequently, is doubtful; though neither of these men was inferior to the reputation they have acquired."—EDITOR.

himself claims the first place in the list—having already named the monarch himself—I shall now turn to his establishment, and in the first place take a review of his personal accoutrements :

CALIBURN.

This is the name of Arthur's sword, as given by Geoffrey of Monmouth. Commentators have endeavoured to derive the word from Chalybs, steel; but it is clear that it is nothing more than the Latinised name of *Caledfwlch*,* the Welsh appellation of the same formidable weapon, according to the practice of Geoffrey of Monmouth, who, having an ear for classic poetry, generally softened down the British words, so as to adapt them to the language he was writing in. According to the Welsh authorities, the original name of Arthur's sword was "*Caled-fwlch*," which means "*hard-notch*," and this explains one of the names of certain swords on the Continent, which have equally puzzled interpreters. In the work of Turpin, it is said, that the name of Roland's sword was *Durrenda*, which the author explains "*durum ictum cum ea dans*;" but in the *Chanson de Roland* it is called *Durendal*.

"Li quens Rollans par mi le champ chevalchet,
Tint Durendal ki ben trenchet e taillet ;"

which points out the etymology of the name, and makes it evident that it is compounded of the French words, *Dur*, *hard*, and *entail*, a *notch*, precisely answering to the Welsh *Caled-fwlch*, *hard-notch*, and which there can be no doubt was received from the bards of Brittany, first translated into French, and then ignorantly explained in Latin.

The arms of Arthur are partially enumerated by Geoffrey of Monmouth; but in the *Mabinogi*, or Ancient Welsh Romance of *Culhwch* and *Olwen*, they are more completely given; for in this tale, of which I believe a translation has never been published,† it is said, that as Arthur was seated in his palace surrounded by his Knights, *Cilhwch*, a young Knight who is in search of *Olwen*, the daughter of *Ysdydd*

* *Query*, *Caled Fwalch*, The Hacking Tool?

† Written in or before 1838.—EDITOR.

aden the giant, comes in, and without naming his object; requests a boon of Arthur, and Arthur answers him:

“ Prince thou shalt have thy boon, be it whatever thy tongue shall name, except my ship, and my mantle, and Caled-fwlch my sword, and Rhongymynat my spear, and Wyneb-gwrthucher my shield, and Carwenan my dagger, and Gwenhwyvar my wife; name what thou wilt, and thou shalt have it freely.”

Having mentioned the name of Olwen, I cannot avoid entertaining an idea that she is the original of the Blanche-fleur of the French Romances, as she is exceeding beautiful, and wherever she treads three white trefoils spring up immediately in the print of her foot, from which she is called *Ol-wen*, white-track.

LANCELOT DU LAC.

As this name is evidently not of Welsh origin, but bears every mark of being French, it has been determined, that although all the other personages of Arthur's Court are British, yet Lancelot du Lac is undoubtedly an exception, and a native of France. But I feel confident that I can satisfactorily point out the British origin of this knight, although his name, in its present form, is certainly French. *Lance* is a *spear*, and *Lat* a *lath*, and therefore *Lance-lat* is *Splinted-spear*, corresponding exactly with the habits of the times, as we find in the descriptions of tournaments, and other encounters of Knights, as “ The spears to shivers sent,” and “ With him to break a spear” at Chevy Chase, and many other passages of the same import. And we have in the Welsh catalogue, a knight occupying a station answering to that of Lancelot, and named *Paladrddellt*, which is precisely *Lath-spear*, from *Paladr* a *spear*, and *dellt*, *lath*. But as this word, from its sound as well as appearance, seemed too intractable to be either Latinised or Gallicised, like Caliburn or Walwein, there was no other mode to be adopted with it than to translate it, and change its structure altogether, and *Paladrddellt* was made into *Lancelot*.

OBERON.

Another personage of Continental Romance is Oberon, the Fairy-king. He is not amongst the number of Arthur's

followers, but he makes a conspicuous appearance in some of the later Romances, and like many other actors in those scenes, I feel assured that he is of Cambrian extraction, and that the original name is Gwyn ap Nudd, the Welsh Fairy King. It must be allowed there is but very little resemblance between the two names to justify such a conclusion, but let us examine the etymology of the words, and the characters of their respective owners. Gwyn ap Nudd [pronounced Neeth,] means White the son of Mist; and Oberon was originally written Auberon, i. e. Alberon, from Albus, White, which is so near the meaning of the other, that with the preceding instances before us, I see no reason to discard this as fanciful or far-fetched, particularly when we consider that each of these personages is the Fairy-king. The only difference is, that France being a level country, Oberon inhabits the woods; whereas in Wales, Gwyn ap Nudd frequents the tops of mountains; but in order to shew the identity of character, I shall here give an extract from an ancient Welsh legend, called the life of St Collen, which has never, to my knowledge, been translated into English.*

After relating several adventures of the saint, the legend proceeds to state, that he came

"To the mountain of Glasynbyri, and there he made himself a hiding place under the cleft of a rock in a secluded place, and as he was one day in his cell, he could hear two persons conversing about Gwyn ap Nudd, and saying that he was King of Annwn, and of the Fairies. And Collen put his head out of his cell and said, Hold your tongues instantly, those are but demons. Hold thou thy tongue said they, thou shalt receive a visit from him. And Collen closed his cell as before.

"And soon after he heard a knocking at the door of his cell, and an inquiring if the owner was within; upon which Collen said, "I am, who is it that asks?"—"It is I, a messenger from Gwyn ap Nudd, to command thee, to come to speak with him on the top of the hill by to-morrow, at noon." But Collen did not go. And the next day behold the same messenger, commanding Collen to come and speak with the King, by noon. And Collen did not go. And the third day, behold the same messenger, commanding Collen to come and speak with the King on the top of the hill, by noon. And if thou comest not,

* 1838.

An abridgment of this Legend has already been given by Mr. Price, see page 146.

Collen, thou wilt be the worse. And Collen being fearful, arose and prepared some holy water, and put it in a pitcher by his side, and went to the top of the hill, and when he came there he could see the fairest castle he had ever beheld, and around it the best arranged troops, and many minstrels, and every kind of music of song and stringed instruments, and horses with most elegant pages mounted on them, and beautiful damsels sprightly, light-footed, gracefully clad, and in the full bloom of youth; and every pompous display that might become the court of a powerful sovereign. And he saw a man of polished manners on the castle top, desiring him to come in, and telling him that the king was waiting him to dinner. And Collen went into the castle, and when he came in he saw the King sitting in a golden chair, and he welcomed Collen honourably, and desired him to proceed to eat, telling him, that besides what he saw on the table before him, he should have the most exquisite of all luxuries that he could ever imagine, and of every liquor that he could wish for, he should have as much as his heart would desire; and every politeness of attention and service, of feasting and amusement, of state and of presents, and every respect and welcome that was due to a man of his wisdom.—“I will not eat the leaves of trees,” said Collen. “Hast thou ever seen men better apparelled than these, in red and blue?” said the King.—“Their apparel is well enough,” replied Collen, “of such apparel as it is.”—“What kind of apparel is that?” said the King. Then said Collen, the red on the one hand, signifies burning, and blue, signifies cold,—and with that, Collen drew out the flask, and threw the holy water on their heads, and instantly they vanished out of his sight, so that there was neither castle nor troops, nor men, nor maidens, nor song, nor music, nor horses, nor pages, nor feast, nor anything whatever, excepting the green hillocks.”

In this story we find all the characters of the Fairy-king and his illusory grandeur. At what period he wandered to the continent, I am not able to discover.

Besides the above story, there is among the Bardic remains of the Welsh, an old composition, consisting of a dialogue between Gwyn ap Nudd and Gwythno Garanhir, Lord of Cantref Gwaelod; the land overflowed by the sea, and forming part of what is now Cardigan Bay. In this dialogue, in which Gwythno Garanhir addresses his friend as an eminent warrior, they both conclude in alternate boasting of their knowledge of the various places in which the warriors of Britain fell in battle.

VIVIANE.

Amongst those names which frequently occur in the old Romances, and of which the British origin is not known, we may mention Viviane, the mistress of Merlin; and who ultimately, by the misdirected use of his own enchantments,

confines him in a magical prison, in the forest of Brocèliande, in Brittany; which, though it is in reality nothing more than a white-thorn, yet presents to his sight the appearance of an impassable castle wall, in whatever direction he looks.

Now, upon a superficial view of this name, we must admit, that though it forms a portion of the Arthurian Romance, yet it has so foreign a character that we know of no counterpart to it amongst the legends of the Welsh. But if we look for a corresponding character, we shall find that the later Merlin, i. e. Sylvestris, does in this particular afford some assistance to his older name-sake. And amongst the compositions attributed to this Sylvestrian Merlin, we find one, admitted to be of at least as old a date as the tenth century, in which the name of Chwifseian occurs as that of a female versed in occult knowledge. This word Owen explains to mean a Nymph who appears and disappears. But from the nature of the dialogue, as well as the sound of the name, there can be no doubt that the author had the character of the Sibyl in view, and that out of this, and some ancient British traditions, he formed the name of Chwifseian, which I have not the least doubt was afterwards Gallicised into Viviane.* This fiction of the Lady of the Lake, and the idea of certain supernatural beings inhabiting lakes, is very common among the Welsh, and may be traced to a very early period. Amongst the poems of Taliesin, we have the following passage concerning the lake of Geirionydd, in North Wales, on the banks of which it is said he resided:

“Dysgogan Derwydd
A fu Anndydd
Wybr Geirionydd
Cerddon a gennydd
Wylliawd eil echwydd
Yn nhorroedd Llynnydd.”

“The Druid relates, who by the water of Geirionydd was a listener to the songs sung by the Gwillion, the children of the evening, in the bosoms of the lakes, &c.”

In the mountains of Carmarthenshire, there is a wild and dreary lake, concerning which, a curious story is told by the peasantry, of some female forms seen on its margin, but

* See p. 144.—EDITOR.

which it was impossible to come near to, as they always kept at a long distance off, however a person might run in order to overtake them. But one day, a young man of the neighbourhood, who had often seen them, and in vain endeavoured to join their party, having well considered an expression which he heard one of them utter, by a certain stratagem, managed to capture her; and she consented to become his wife, at the same time assuring him that if he ever should strike her, she would return and leave him for ever. As they were going towards his habitation, she turned towards the lake, and called out, in the way the country people do when they call the cows, and immediately several beautiful cows and oxen came up out of the lake, together with other cattle, enough to stock a farm, and followed her intended husband to their home.

This couple, for several years, lived very happily in their farm; but one day as they were out in the ground ploughing, he, in a moment of irritation, in consequence of some offence, struck his wife, and immediately she left him and set off towards the lake; and as she was departing, she called the cattle in the same way she had done when they first appeared, and the whole stock of the farm immediately followed her, and were lost sight of in the lake, and never seen again. In confirmation of the truth of this tale, there is still to be seen a deep furrow-shaped trench leading to the lake, which was made by the plough as the oxen dragged it after them.

There are many other superstitious still existing in Wales, concerning the inhabitants of lakes, all shewing the native origin of this style of fiction.

ENIDE

She is no other than the Welsh Enid, the daughter of Yniwl.

LUNET.

This is the Eluned of the Mabinogion.

POUSTOUNED.

In the Romance of Perceforest, there is a minstrel called Poustounet. And amongst the Welsh Bards, there was an inferior order or kind of minstrel, called Pen Pastwn.

YSEULT.

The fair Yseult is the Eysyllt of the Welsh, which was the name of a Welsh Queen in the ninth century, the daughter of Conan Tindaethwy.

GIRFLET LE PETIT,—ARTHUR'S SQUIRE.

Girflet le Petit is named in *Le Manteau mal taillé*, and is the squire of King Arthur. The original is, most probably, Eiddilic Corr, who is mentioned in the Triads, together with Tristan, and another as noted for obstinacy, and never being turned from his purpose. The word Eiddil, signifies feeble, and Corr, means a Dwarf; so that Feeble the Dwarf, may have given the idea of Le Petit.

The Corrs or Dwarfs form a part of the Welsh system of fiction. The word occurs in a Tale which is inserted in the Welsh copy of Geoffrey of Monmouth, but is not in the Latin. The Tale recounts the three oppressions of the Island of Britain, which happened in the time of King Ludd.

"The first of them was some race of people called the Coranians, and so great was their knowledge, that there was not an expression which the wind came in contact with, that they did not know.

And their coin was corr's money. "A'u bath oedd arian corr;" which, probably, in English would bear the sense of "and their coin was fairy money," i. e. bearing the appearance of real money when received, but after being kept, turning into bits of withered leaves, &c.

"Then King Ludd was extremely sad and distressed that such oppressions should exist in the Island of Britain, and by the general advice of his nobles, King Ludd went over to France to his brother, Llevelys, [who was then King of France, in right of his wife,] to seek his council; for Llevelys was a wise and discreet man. And after Ludd had mentioned to him his object, they took advice how to converse together so that the wind should not come in contact with their words; and in order to effect this, Llevelys caused a long horn to be made, to speak through. So they held their conversation through the horn. But neither of them could hear from the other any thing save exceedingly bitter and abusive language. And Llevelys understood that a demon had got into the horn, and he caused it to be washed with wine; and then they found their expressions correct. And Llevelys told his brother that he would give him certain insects, which when he returned he should bruise in water, and assemble the whole nation, Britons and Coranians, and throw this water over them all in-

discriminately ; and he would undertake that the Coranians would all die, but that the Britons would not be injured.

When Ludd returned he assembled the whole nation, &c. and according to Llevelys's statement, the Coranians were all destroyed.

BRANGIAN.

In the Romance of Tristan, we find the name of Brangian, who is represented as an Irish Lady, and the confidante of Yseult ; and there can be no doubt that this is the Welsh Branwen, or as the name is more generally written, Bronwen. She was the daughter of Llyr Llediaith, and sister to Brân, the father of Caractacus ; and there is a very curious fact connected with her history.*

In the year 1813 a—

"Farmer living on the banks of the Alaw, a river in Anglesey, having occasion for stones to make some addition to his farm buildings, and having observed a stone or two peeping through the turf, of a circular elevation, on a flat, not far from the river, was induced to examine it ; when after paring off the turf, he came to a considerable heap of stones, or Carnedd, covered with earth, which he removed with some degree of caution, and got to a Cist, formed of coarse flags, canted and covered over. On removing the lid, he found it contained an urn, placed with its mouth downwards, and full of ashes and half calcined fragments of bone. The report of this discovery soon went abroad, and came to the ears of the parson of the parish, and another neighbouring clergyman, both fond of, and conversant with Welsh antiquities, who were immediately reminded of a passage in one of the early Welsh Romances, called Mabinogion, [or Juvenile Tales ;] the same that is quoted in Dr. Davies's Latin and Welsh Dictionary, as well as in Richards', under the word Petruall [square.] 'Bedd petruall a wnaed i Fronwen merch Llyr ar lan Alaw oc yno y claddwyd hi.' A square grave was made for Bronwen, the daughter of Llyr, on the banks of the Alaw, and there she was buried."

Sir Richard Hoare, by whom the above was written to the Editor of the Cambro Briton, continues :—

"Happening to be in Anglesey soon after the discovery, I could not resist the temptation of paying a visit to so memorable a spot, though separated from it by a distance of eighteen miles. I found it exactly as described to me by the clergymen above mentioned, and as characterised by the cited passage from the Romance. The Tumulus, raised over the venerable deposit, was of considerable circuit, elegantly rounded, but low ; about a dozen paces from the river Alaw.† The

* See Cambro Briton. Vol. II.

† The Editor of the Cambro Briton adds : "This spot is still called Ynys Bronwen ; or the Islet of Bronwen."

urn was preserved entire, with an exception of a small bit out of the lip, was ill-baked, very rude and simple, having no other ornament than little pricked dots; in height, from a foot, to fourteen inches, and nearly of the following shape."



This interesting relic is now in the British Museum.*

Sir Richard Hoare proceeds to notice the history of Bronwen, and says that—

"Her adventures are connected with Ireland, where she was ill-treated by Matholwch, the then King of that Island; in consequence of which she left it, and landing in Wales, the Romance tells us, she looked back upon Ireland, which freshening the memory of the indignity she had met with there, broke her heart."

This occurrence is mentioned in the Triads:

"Tair engyr balfawd ynys Prydain, palfawd Matholwch wyddel a Fronwen ferch Llyr, &c."

The three savage blows of the hand of the Island of Britain,—the blow of Matholwch the Irishman, on Bronwen the daughter of Llyr, &c.

The expression, "*bedd petrual*," "*four square grave*," is always applied to those ancient sepulchres formed of stone, something in the form of a cromlech, which are found on the mountains, under carns and tumuli; such graves are often mentioned in ancient Welsh writings, as for example,—

"Piau y bedd petrual
Ai bedwar maen amytal
Bedd Madawc Marchawc dywal." †

* British Collection. Cases 28—33. 1854.—EDITOR.

† Memorials of the Graves of the Warriors. *Myf. Arch.* Vol. I. p. 82.

Whose is the quadrangular grave
 With its four enclosing stones?
 It is the grave of Madoc, the intrepid warrior.

And again—

“Bedd Owain ap Urien yn mhetrual bydd
 Dan weryd Llan Morfael
 Yn Abererch Rhydderch Hael.”*

The grave of Owen the son of Urien is a quadrangular grave under the turf of Llanmorfael. In Abererch is the grave of Rhydderch Hael.

MORHOULT.

In the Romance of Meliadus of Leonnoys, written by Rusticien de Pise, (temp. Henry III.) mention is made of Morhault, King of Ireland; and the foregoing story of Bronwen makes it very probable, that he is the Matholwch of the Welsh Romance. How far this corresponds with the real history of Ireland, is unimportant, as the object of this Essay is to identify the materials of Chivalrous Romance, with their ancient British originals, whether of real history or absolute fiction.

RUNALEN.

This name of Runalen occurs in the Romance of Tristan, where he is described as the brother of Yseult, a Breton lady. The original is doubtless Run ap Alun, i. e. Rhun the son of Alun Dyfed, whose grave is noticed in the Memorials: so exactly have the old Romances followed their British originals.

GADEFER—THE HORSE OF LANFAL.

As another instance of the continual recurrence of the Continental Romancers to their ancient Cambrian depository of legendary materials, we notice that even this name, which occurs in the *Lai de Gruelan*, and might appear a mere arbitrary fabrication, is to be found amongst the British remains; for in an ancient composition, entitled a dialogue between Ugnach ab Mydno and Taliesin, we find it applied to the horse of Taliesin.

“*Taliesin.*

Marchawc a girch y Dinas
 Ae con guinion ae cirn bras
 Nyth adwaen, nu rythweles.

* *Myf. Arch.* Vol. I. p. 79.—EDITOR.

Ugnach.

Marchawc a girch i'r Aber
Y ar y march cadarn Cadfer
Dabre gwnhiw nim gwatter.”*

Taliesin

Thou knight, who repairest to the fortress
With thy white dogs and great brass hunting horns,
I know thee not, I never saw thee.

Ugnach.

Knight, repairing to the estuary,
On thy powerful steed Gadfer,
Hasten along with me,—I will take no denial.

From the heading, it appears that the fortress, or the city, (Dinas,) is Caerseon,† (Segontium,) Caernarvon; and the estuary is the Aber on the road to Conway.—The word *Gadfer* is in the Welsh, fierce in battle.

As the Welsh traditions, in passing down from the Druidical age, most undoubtedly underwent some modification in every century, according to the state of manners and customs of the day, it may be interesting to inquire what character they assumed in Wales, in the days of Chivalry; and here we shall find, that although they do generally, in their language and allusions, indicate the age in which they were composed; yet they invariably exhibit one strong and un-failing peculiarity, which is a pure and unmixed nationality of character. Whatever extraneous matter may sometimes attach to them, the substance is always Welsh; I shall explain my meaning in this assertion by saying, that a Tale written in the thirteenth or fourteenth century, will, by the manners described, by the style of the armour worn, and other peculiarities, point out that period, so as not to be mistaken that the actors are Welsh; and the localities, and the

* Myf. Arch. vol. I. p. 46.

† *Caer-seiont*. The Segontium of Antoninus appears to have been *Caer Segont*, a city upon the river Seiont, described by Richard of Cirencester (B. 1. c. 6. s. 21.) to have stood “near the Cangian promontory, on the Mineiran shore, opposite Mona:” and mentioned by Nennius, in his History, (s. 25 Giles’s Edition,) as a city near Caernarvon, upon the pavement of which Constantius, the Father of Constantine the Great, “sowed 3 seeds of gold, silver, and brass, that no poor person might ever be found there;” and also as the place of his interment. Caernarvon was *Caer Gusteint*.—EDITOR.

whole tone of thought and description of the same school. And I should not fear to assert, that so far from merely keeping pace with the times, the Welsh Romances are at all times far in advance of those of the same date in other countries, especially in that property which indicates the presence of genius. As an example of the style of composition among the Welsh in the fourteenth century, I shall give here some portions of a piece, called, the Dream of Gruffydd ap Addaf ap Dafydd; which has never, as far as I know, been translated into English. The author was killed at Dolgelley, in some affray, about the year 1370. The following is merely an outline, with the exception of the conclusion; and the Tale is in prose, except also the conclusion.

“The Dream of a youth of the district of Arwysli, who endured the severest agony of love.—As he was in Bangor, in Gwynedd, after wine out of glass and silver, mead out of buffalo horn, and ale out of maple, [masarn,] he retired to his chamber, and fell asleep; and he found himself walking along the banks of a river, through a lonely wood, where the birds were singing melodiously. At the extremity of the wood, he perceived a beautiful valley, &c. with a river running through it; with deer and various animals of chase sporting about; and also swans on the river, and peacocks on the banks; and grouse, and black cocks; and along the valley, in every direction, there was honey-suckle, and there were vines.

“On the south side of that valley, he perceived a splendid and stately castle, with numerous lofty towers; and in the highest tower, he saw a noble lady through a window, sitting, in a magnificent dress of flame-coloured silk and purple; with a veil of red silk on her head, with a coronet of gold, and four and twenty precious gems in the coronet, the least brilliant of which shone like the midsummer sun. Below the coronet was a forehead, white and smooth, and smooth slender eye-brows; two black eyes bright as the falcon’s, crimson cheeks, a nose of beautiful form; mouth and lips, and neck, and bosom, are [described in the same manner: but the words being compound, it is impossible to find corresponding terms in English] hands, with long slender fingers, and the nails white. And the highly-aspiring youth fixed a gaze of wild and anxious affection upon the lady. And she spoke to him with an emphatic and distinct utterance. ‘It were fitter for thee to look at the multitude beyond thee, than thus to gaze on me so steadfastly.’ With that the youth turned his eyes towards the other side, and there he beheld two immense hosts approaching, the one coming from the north, and the other from the west; with numerous banners, and standards of various colours, and the heads of the hosts before them: they were not merely two hosts, but two armies; mighty assemblages of armed men. And by the time the sun was as high as the tops of the trees, the two armies arrived, one from each direction of the valley; and they lifted the standards, and unfurled the banners, and lowered the spears and arranged the chargers: and before the battle was ended in that valley,

there was heard the inflicting of blows, in strenuous fierce encounters, and hard fighting ; with remembrance of enmity, and reproach of broken faith, and prosecution of revenge : and horses prancing and horse-men fatigued, and Merlin predicting, and ruddy lances alluring blood-thirsty ravens ; and battered helmets, and quickly-responding shouts, and trampling, and wrath, and avoiding of disgrace, and accusation, and harsh replying, and full turmoil. And men with mutilated visages, and pools of blood, and horses without riders, and feet without stirrups ; and the subduing of the Branwys, and the slaughtering of the Lloegrwys ; and the sharp-edged weapons, and valorous encountering, and fierce looks : and abundant hostility, and cheeks stained with blood, and sweating and toil, and a twin-sister to Camlan. And death and groaning, and applause to bravery, and swords notched, and mortal wounds. And the Branes [standards] lowered and the Brython overcome.*

"The youth then looked for the lady in the tower, and she was viewing her face in the gems in the rings upon her fingers ; and then the youth said to the lady,—

Goreu bun gwen o'r gaer eglurlin
Glaer ei llun a'i lliw
Puham yr ymwan heddyw, &c.

Youth.

Most beauteous lady of this splendid castle, of
Fairest form and countenance, wherefore was this
Furious conflict to day ?

Lady.

Not for the shrubs in yonder bower, nor for the
Marble in this tower, and sculptured stone ;
It was for me this fight was fought.

Youth.

Fairest lady of exalted rank, and wide spread fame,
What are the names of the knights engaged ?

Lady.

The name of yonder knight, who slew the
Brynaich with his own hand, is Paen the
Red-handed slaughterer of Brittany.

Youth.

Who is the warrior, who together with his host
Lies yonder, with the armorial ravens on his arms ? [Armorial bearings, perhaps.]

Lady.

The red bladed Llawred of the north—
On my account he met his death.

Youth.

Thy beauty has this day caused the alluring of the ravens
to blood : Is there hope for the youth who loves thee ?

* Almost a literal translation.

Lady.

Youth, hear my words which are not false—There never was a hope, there is none, and none will ever be never with.....I will and.....that.....

“ And with that the youth awoke.”

The whole structure of this Tale, the dream, the transition from prose to poetry, and the abrupt and tantalizing ending, shews a degree of taste and sentiment, perhaps, equal to any thing that can be shewn, not only in the fourteenth century, but even in times of much greater cultivation of literary composition.

BRITTANY.

HAVING shewn that the earliest efforts of genius, in modern Europe, were directed towards the framing of imaginative Tales, founded upon the history and traditions of the Welsh, and having the warriors and celebrated characters of that race for their heroes; it remains to inquire, by what channel these traditions found their way to the continent, and also the cause of their universal adoption.

The channel of communication was, undoubtedly, in the first instance, the Welsh colony in Armorica; which whether founded by Conan Meriadec, in the fourth century, or by later settlers, it is clear, as early as the sixth century, Brittany occupied an important station among the provinces of Gaul, as an independent state, having its own native Kings, and carrying on war against other powerful nations, as the Franks, and Alains, &c. And so eminent was this colony, that the province of Armorica received the name of Little Britain, Britannia Minor; whilst the Island of Britain was distinguished from it by that of Major Britannia: which names, in the French, were, in later times, Grande et Petite Bretagne, Great Britain, and Little Britain; the one being still used to designate this Island, having been adopted by the Government as the distinguishing appellation, in such legal documents as refer to the Island at large; and it is a remarkable fact, that the ancient race which gave its present name to this country, did also, by

the emigration of its Armorican off set, occasion the adoption of the appellation, which now forms so honourable a distinction amongst the nations of the world.

When the British colony passed over to the continent, it is certain that they carried with them their traditions, and national legends; and, retaining their original language unchanged, they were able to hand down those traditions in a way that was impossible amongst the other nations, all of whom had lost their ancient language, and were for some centuries in a state of transition from the language of the ancient world to that of the modern. This Breton colony, therefore, forms the most probable link of connection between the Continent and Great Britain; and, accordingly, we find that the earliest writers of Romance refer to Brittany as the source of much of their legendary knowledge, as for instance:

also,—	“ Bons Lais de harpe vus apris Lais Bretuns de nostre pais.”	Tristan.
	“ Le cuntes ke jo sai verais Dunt li Bretun unt fait lor Lais.”	Lai de Gugemer.
	“ Une aventure vus dirai Dunt li Bretun firent un Lai.”	Lai de Laustic.

Here the word Laustic is Breton, and signifies the nightingale: the name of that bird in Welsh is *Eos*, and Laustic seems of the same origin: perhaps *L' eostic*, the latter syllable being common to both languages.

There are also numerous allusions to the celebrity of the Breton Lais among the Trouvères, and the heroes and localities are generally Welsh, and the same allusions are found in Chaucer:

“ Thise old gentil Bretons in hir dayes,
Of diverse adventures maden layes
Rimeyed in hir first Breton tonge—
And on of hem have I in remembrance
In Armorike, that called is Bretaigne.”

As these, and similar quotations, are given in Warton, there is no occasion for adding them here, inasmuch as that work* is too well known to require such repetition.

It was not merely among their immediate neighbours that

* Warton's History of English Poetry.—EDITOR.

the Bretons enjoyed this celebrity, but the songs and *lais* of Brittany were known and appreciated even amongst the inhabitants of Provence, as may be seen in one of the compositions of Folquet de Marseille.

“ Ia no volgra qu’hom auzis
 Los doulz chans dels auzellos
 Mas cill qui son amors ;
 Que res tan no m’esbandis
 Co il auzelet per la planha ;
 E ilh belha cui son aclis,
 Cella m’platz mais que chansos
 Volta, ni lais de Bretanha.”

“ I would not any man should hear
 The birds that sweetly sing above,
 Save he who knows the power of love ;
 For nought beside can soothe or cheer
 My soul like that sweet harmony ;
 And her who yet more sweet and dear,
 Hath greater power my soul to move,
 Than songs or lays of Brittany.”

LAYS OF THE MINNE-SINGERS. London 1825.

Besides this Breton channel of communication, it is probable that many Welsh legends were imported into France by the Norman settlers in England, as, almost immediately after the conquest, several Norman Barons established themselves on the borders of Wales, and even acquired lands within the Principality itself, who were known by the name of Marchers ; and we know, that in the course of time, several of the descendants of these Norman Lords became great promoters of Welsh literature, especially in the district of Glamorgan ; and it appears impossible that these men could have cultivated the Welsh language themselves, and patronised the Bards, without at the same time transferring into their native French some of the treasures which so much interested them.

BRETON COMPOSITIONS STILL EXTANT.

Having cited so many authorities proving the Breton origin of the Lays, quoted by the Trouvères and Troubadours, as well as the extensive influence which these compositions had on the Continent, it appears natural to inquire, Whether there are any remains of these compositions still remaining in

Brittany, and what form that species of literature assumed in that country? In answer to such inquiry, I can only say that I have not been able to discover in that country any composition of an ancient character: the oldest I should refer to a period subsequent to the fourteenth century. There are in private hands a few manuscripts, containing some of the dramatic compositions, called Mysteries, such as :

St. Trefinnan, Princess of Brittany ; St. Genivieve of Brabant ; Jacob and Joseph ; and The Passion.

I do not believe they contain anything different to the generality of those pieces in other countries; but I speak from a very slight examination of the manuscripts. The only printed work of a Romantic character, that I am acquainted with in the Breton language, is that called "*Buez ar pevar Mab Emon*:"* "*The Life of the four Sons of Emon*;" printed at Morlaix, by Ledan, in 1818; which is an octavo of 416 pages, and is called a Tragedy. It is, in fact, a Dramatic Poem, with the exception of a few pages at the end, in which the narrative is continued in prose. This Romance is of the *Cyclus* of Charlemagne, and is founded upon the *Quatre Fils Aymon*, said to be by Huon de Villeneuve. The actors are Charlemagne and his Paladins, with the other characters of that *Cyclus*. Whether any of the materials of this Romance are taken from the ancient British legends, I am not prepared to determine; but I cannot avoid noticing, that the sword of Maugis, which he obtains from the Giant, seems but an imitation of the Caliburn of Arthur. It is called *Flamberjé*, and is described as being

"Forged in Hell, and tempered in the blood of Asps."

And the Giant, in surrendering it to him, says :

"*Flamberj eus da goste, ha Boyard dindannout
Ep don rac deu ebet ech elles mont partout.*"

"With *Flamberjé* by thy side, and Boyard under thee,
Without fear of any man on earth, thou may'st go where'er thou wilt."

This Boyard is the horse, which, together with the sword,

* See pp. 68—80.—EDITOR.

was originally obtained from the demon Rouart, and is described as being

“Strong as the ocean, and fleet as the gale.”

“Creñ e evel ar mor, buan vel an avel.”

This Mojis, or Maugis, is the same with the Malgis and Malagigi of similar works in other languages, and it is rather a singular coincidence, that there is, among the Welsh legends, notice of some evil which befel the Island of Britain in the mythological ages, called the “Oppression of the Horse of Malaen,” which name bears so near a resemblance to Malgis, that I am inclined to think that the idea came from Wales, along with many others of the same character, which may be seen even in later periods than that of the Arthurian Romance. The mythology of the Welsh, which probably is of Druidic origin, abounds with instances of a similar nature, amongst which may be mentioned the Spectre Bulls of the Island of Britain, &c. But however this may be, it is clear that the Arthurian Romances were still in possession of their ancient territory when this Poem was composed, for the author in speaking of the necromantic skill of Maugis, says,

“He was learned in the art of Merlin, and vastly expert in it.”

“Ebars en art Merlin, ez è meurbet habil.”

GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH.

A QUESTION may now arise as to the real extent of the influence, which this extraordinary book had upon the mind and literature of Europe. There are some who maintain that the first acquaintance with the ancient British traditions, was occasioned by the introduction of Geoffrey's work, and that all the particulars of the Arthurian Romance were derived from it. But this is a mistake, inasmuch as the Breton lays, as given by the Trouvères, contain many portions of British history and fable not to be found in Geoffrey of Monmouth; which argues that there existed some other source. And even Geoffrey himself says he discarded the prophecy of the Eagle, which was uttered during the building of Caer Septon, (Shaftsbury,) because he did not consider it authentic. But whatever materials may have been obtained from this, or any other source, it is certain that

the work of Geoffrey of Monmouth did either actually rouse the literary genius of Europe out of its long sleep, or else, coming at the very moment of its awakening, this book presented to it those images which for many centuries continued to be the foremost and most interesting objects, and which, even to the present day, have not entirely withdrawn themselves.

THE PROGRESS OF IMAGINATION,

FROM THE TWELFTH CENTURY DOWN.

For a considerable time after the awakening in the twelfth century, there was but little change in the style of thought. The first outbursting of intellect was powerful, and the current kept on an even unvarying course for many ages. But at length, for some causes, which it would be out of place here to investigate, a change of character began to be exhibited, and the Arthurian Romance was superseded by that of Charlemagne. But this did not possess attractions sufficient to ensure it a continuance, and it was in its turn obliged to give way to other systems, as the Amadis, and the Palmerins; each of which enjoyed its era of popularity. But each successive age brought with it an increase of restlessness in the human mind, so that the reign of each particular style of imagination appears to have been reduced in point of duration; and to so great a degree has this mobility of character proceeded, that a strain of thought which once would continue popular for several generations, will now scarcely outlive as many years; and he is a powerful writer in the present day, who, if he has enjoyed a moderate old age, does not see his early compositions grown obsolete and forgotten. Pope and Sterne, and many others of the last century, whose works were once so popular, as absolutely to furnish proverbial quotations and maxims of established authority, are scarcely even known to the young people of the present generation. Since their time, many new and influential styles of writing have appeared, and again sunk into forgetfulness. Amongst those deserving of notice, for originality of conception, the following may be adduced. The novels of Fielding and Smollet, and others of that class, which had their effect in the placing in a striking

light, some of the most interesting occurrences of common life : the Castle of Otranto, and the Old English Baron ; in which a more poetical and imaginative channel of thought was opened, which had a very powerful effect upon the literature of the day, and still continues, though under certain modifications. It was from this school that the Radeliffe novels proceeded, and many others of a strain of thought, though varying in some particulars, yet evidently bearing marks of that origin. And lastly came the historical novels, to which Scott gave the finishing touch ; and though not the founder of the school, yet he carried the system to such a degree of perfection, that no future writer can do more than remind his reader, that he is an imitator of a vastly superior original. Probably, in all the principal styles, some remote influence of the early Romance might be discovered. At any rate, it is certain that the style of thought has by no means ceased to exist, as may be seen in the Bridal of Triermain, and many other compositions ; as well as in the dramatic exhibitions which have been founded upon that work, and have met with such encouraging reception. What the next character of thought may be, it is useless to attempt to conjecture, but we may rest assured that the stores of imagination are not yet exhausted ; and without presuming upon any faculty of foresight, but only from a due observation of the past, we may confidently expect, that but a short time can elapse before some new train of thought shall be discovered, and some new feelings called into action, as different in character to those we have already experienced, as the Poems of Scott are to those of Pope ; or the Mysteries of Udolpho to Sir Charles Grandison : But what will the traditions of Wales have to do with this new species of composition ?—That it is impossible to conjecture : but we may entertain a decided expectation, that they will not cease to exist in some form or other, as it is utterly impossible that the impulses which directed the minds of Spenser and Milton, and Gray, and Southey, and Scott, should ever entirely lose their power.

“ Hic jacet Arthurus, Rex quondam, Rex que futurus.

A

CRITICAL ESSAY

ON THE

History of the Language and Literature of Wales:

FROM THE TIME OF GRUFFYDD AP CYNAN AND
MEILYR, TO THAT OF SIR GRUFFYDD
LLWYD AND GWILYM DDU:

ACCOMPANIED WITH SPECIMENS, BOTH IN THE ORIGINAL, AND IN A CLOSE ENGLISH
TRANSLATION OF THE POEMS MOST CHARACTERISTIC OF THAT PERIOD.

BY

Amengar.

THE first page of this Essay in manuscript, though dated 1828, bears also, by way of title, a pasted extract from the Programme of the Abergavenny Eisteddfod of 1848, announcing the subject for the Prize given on that occasion, by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales. The successful Competitor was Mr. Stephens of Merthyr.

The component matter of this Essay is so nearly the same as that contained in Mr. Price's Treatise of 1845, on the "Comparative merits of the Remains of Ancient Literature in the Welsh, Irish, and Gaelic Languages," that the Editor has found it necessary, in order to avoid a series of repetitions, and to do strict justice to the Author, to adopt the following plan:

The original structure of the Essay is preserved inviolate, and, with the exception of a few reiterated sentences, all Mr. Price's own remarks are fully given. The first line of every example is preserved, and all the fresh quotations are inserted at full length. Notwithstanding the disadvantages resulting from its construction out of materials almost identical with those of another work, this Essay, taken separately and as a whole, possesses considerable merit.

A Critical Essay

On the History of the Language and Literature of Wales.

THE period of time, within which the works under consideration were produced, extends over a space of near 250 years ; sa Gruffyth ap Cynan claimed the throne in 1075, and the earliest extant Poëm of Meilyr the Bard was composed in 1080 ; whilst Sir Gruffyth Llwyd and Gwilym Ddu were alive in 1323. We are, therefore, enabled to contemplate the several aspects assumed by Welsh Poetry, during the extent of this period, as well with regard to its style of prosodiacal construction, as the degree of talent evinced by its respective professors. And in this period of 250 years, as there are evident appearances of a rise and decline of poetic genius, and as similar appearances present themselves in the poetry of the sixth and seventh centuries, we are led to imagine that we perceive, in the intellectual world, certain seasons of spring and autumn, as in the natural ; certain periodical movements of excitement and subsidence, influenced by laws and agencies hitherto unknown, and which have scarcely attracted attention as subjects of investigation. That such an awakening did take place in the sixth century, and also in the eleventh, there can be no question ; but to assign causes for such outbreaks of genius would be no safe undertaking.

Whether the people, being roused to action by foreign aggression in the sixth century, by the Saxon invasion, and in the eleventh by the Norman, were upon each occasion animated by similar sentiments, and gave them utterance by a similar mode of expression, or whether there was at each of these periods some endemic excitement amongst the western nations, which impelled them to an extraordinary exertion of mind and body, is a question not to be hastily determined. If it should be maintained, that the bursting out of the Bardic *awen* in the sixth century, was occasioned by the excitement caused by the Saxon invasion, it may be asked, What occasioned the subsiding of that spirit at the close of the seventh century, and the general torpor which prevailed from that time to the close of the eleventh century? as during that time there is but little extant that deserves the name of poetry. It could not have been the absence of hostile aggression, inasmuch as the Saxon wars by no means ceased with the subsiding of the Bardic ardour in the seventh century; but on the contrary, there were continual hostilities for some ages afterwards, as with Offa and Ethelbald, and others, but of which there is no poetic memorial extant. Again, in the eighth and ninth centuries, the Welsh had to maintain a most arduous, and victorious struggle against the Danes; and yet we do not find that the Bardic spirit was upon this occasion roused from its torpor. And yet there never was a time that called for more strenuous exertion, or afforded greater cause for national exultation. For those ferocious barbarians, having overrun England and Ireland, and possessed themselves of a considerable portion of Scotland, were continually infesting the coasts of Wales, yet were never able to obtain a footing in the country. And when once, with a powerful army, they made an irruption into the Principality, they were so vigorously attacked by the Welsh, that they were defeated with immense slaughter, and compelled to retreat across the Severn: and yet there was no demonstration of a corresponding excitement amongst the Bards.

Again, at the period of the Norman invasion of Wales, although, probably, the spirit of Bardism received an additional stimulus from the stirring events of the time; yet, there are certain facts which seem to indicate that the

awakening of that spirit is not attributable to the Norman invasion ; but on the contrary, that it had already commenced before that invasion took place. It does not appear that the collision between the Welsh and Normans had become general prior to the year 1091, when Robert Fitzhamon invaded Glamorgan ; but we have reason to believe that the Bardic *awen* manifested symptoms of an awakening full ten years before that event ; and the subject which exercised the talents of the only Bard of the time, whose works are extant, was a struggle betwixt two native princes : the battle of Carno, fought in 1080, betwixt Gruffyth ap Cynan, and Trahaearn ap Caradawc, in which the latter was slain ; and the composition alluded to is a short Ode by Meilyr, who was himself present. This composition of Meilyr partakes considerably of the torpor of that and the preceding ages ; though there is observable in this Ode, as well as in the other works of Meilyr, a degree of animation sufficient to indicate a transition to a more spirited style ; and in the generation immediately succeeding this Bard, there appears such a constellation of talented composers, together with such a change of style, as most distinctly to mark a new era ; whilst in a couple of centuries more, we discover an evident flagging of the spirit of poetry ; and, at last, a sinking into a state of torpor, almost as great as that of the dark ages.

Now, when we contemplate these sudden outbursts of genius in the sixth and eleventh centuries, and their consequent subsiding, we are disposed to infer a certain periodical fluctuation in the intellectual world, and to imagine that these phenomena of the appearance and disappearance of poetic inspiration are the effects of impulses undiscovered, and totally independent of political movements, as far as regards their origin. And this inference naturally leads us to inquire, whether we cannot perceive a corresponding mental excitement in other particulars of a social nature. In this inquiry, our attention is first of all directed to the sixth century ; and here we find the state of the World rather favourable, than otherwise, to the confirmation of our theory. For we find, at this time, a general commotion amongst the nations. New confederations are formed, the

elements of new states and new kingdoms elaborated, and the whole frame-work of Society new modelled. So that we must conclude, that the excitement of the sixth century was not limited to the Welsh, but extended over other nations; though its effects did not manifest themselves by the same awakening of poetic inspiration.

Again, at the close of the eleventh century, as if refreshed by a sleep of 400 years, we find the Bardic *awen* again awake, and immediately in high action; and this with as little apparent cause as its previous sinking to rest. But this excitement is not confined to Wales. We perceive it throughout the whole of the western world; a new impulse seems to be communicated to the mind, and the effects of its renovated energies are everywhere evident. New languages are formed, new books written, new structures are erected; turreted and embattled castles take the place of earthen forts, whilst groined and vaulted cathedrals occupy the sites of wattled and mud-walled fabrics; chivalric honours are created, and crusades undertaken in far distant countries: in short, the whole aspect of society is altered, and as great a difference is seen betwixt the twelfth and tenth centuries, as betwixt the waking and sleeping man. Nor is this change to be attributed to any continuity of causes, any more than the vegetation of spring is attributable to the previous autumnal cultivation of the soil: the ground may be tilled, and the seed planted, but the vitality and germination must proceed from some other cause.

But as this discussion may appear irrelevant, we shall return to the subject of Welsh Poetry, as existing during the period under consideration, and inquire into the attitude and position it assumed in its renovated state. And here we shall find a somewhat curious fact,—that after so many ages of comparative inactivity, the Bardic genius of the eleventh century exhibited the identical aspect under which it appeared in the sixth, and was, as regards style, essentially Lyric. Exceptions scarcely exist; there is no instance of the Epic, and but few of the Narrative. And if we were required to illustrate this Lyric style of the Welsh Bards, by a comparison with classic productions, we should certainly name Pindar as the Poet whose style they most resemble:

there is the same digression, the same desultory character and sudden transition, and not unfrequently the same expressiveness of compound words ; as for instance, in Gwalchmai's "Mochdwyreawg," early-rising sun ; and the Prydydd Bychan's "Aesdromrudd," heavy-crimsoned shield ; so that, altogether, the most appropriate term by which to designate the works of the Welsh Bards, would be that of Pindaric. But here the resemblance ceases; the themes of our Cambrian minstrels and of their Theban antecessor are very different. And we must maintain, to the honour of our Welsh Bards, that there never was a race of men whose patriotic ardour glowed more intensely, or whose talents were more entirely devoted to their country. The heroes they celebrated were the warriors who really defended their native soil ; and the events they recorded were the battles actually fought in the cause of national liberty. And here we cannot but notice a striking contrast between the direction of the ancient British *awen* in the middle ages, and that taken by the modern muse of Britain in our own times. For whilst, during the long and desperate struggle of the last war, the utmost efforts of the nation were exerted against a powerful and inveterate enemy, and its best blood unsparingly shed by sea and land ; with the exception of Campbell's "Battle of the Baltic," not a single Ode was offered in tribute by any of the leading Poets of the day ; but the brightest genius of the country lavished its powers upon the villanies of Moss-troopers and Corsairs, and other worthless characters of the same stamp ; and of those multitudes "on the deck of fame that died," excepting the great commander of our naval forces, and "the gallant good Riou ;" who of them all has had the good fortune to have even his name recorded in any work of poetic excellence ? It is true we have seen one individual who evinced a more patriotic spirit, and that was Dibdin ; one who, though not of the highest order of genius, yet, was equally effective in his compositions with the most distinguished men of the age ; and, in a great measure, supplied the deficiency caused by their unnational and apathetic conduct ; and who deserved well of his country, and better than he received, for the unflagging spirit with which he brought out his animating sea songs : but then, even Dibdin

was influenced by the same feeling of idealism, and all his heroes are imaginary beings, *Tom Tough*, *Jack Junk* and *Ben Block*, &c. He was the Poet of a class, and not the recorder of individual merit, nor even of particular national occurrences, however glorious.

In this general charge of ingratitude against the poetic genius of modern Britain, should I be told that there are many brilliant exceptions that I have overlooked, I answer that I know of none. Wolfe's "Death of Moore" was a posthumous publication, brought out many years after the event; and Scott's "Waterloo," as well as Byron's lines on the same subject, came too late; after the struggle was over, and their exciting influence was no longer wanted.

In fixing the general character of the Welsh Poetry of the middle ages, we must designate it as an incorporation of patriotic sentiment, and an expression of public enthusiasm, connected with the real and immediate occurrence of national events; and in this character we feel constrained to assign it a high, if not the highest grade, in the scale of European poetry. Neither Greece nor Rome can furnish a parallel instance. Pindar stands alone in this class, but the subjects of his praise, though real existences, were not so strictly national. The Spanish Ballads are all Romances; whilst the Trouvères and Troubadours of France, the Minne-singers of Germany, and the Scalds of the North, occupied themselves, either with fabulous events, or with those of such remote occurrences as to admit of their being treated as fables.

And as the poetry of the Welsh appears to be indigenous in regard of direction and train of thought, so it does also in its prosody and metrical construction. And here a curious fact presents itself. After 300 years of Roman dominion, upon the departure of that people, Welsh poetry had not the slightest resemblance to that of Rome. The essentials of Roman metrical composition consist in quantity; those of the Welsh are Rhyme and Alliteration. The Latin classic prosody does not recognise the two last named requisites, nor does the Welsh know any thing of classic quantity: neither is there any resemblance in the structure of the poems of the two races, further than what is the result of mere coincidence in all metrical compositions.

It has been noticed that, in the Welsh poetry, the Lyric is the predominant style; there is a total absence of the Epic, and but few instances of the Narrative; and amongst such instances, perhaps the most remarkable is the *Awdl Fraith*, a production of doubtful authorship, and sometimes ascribed to Taliesin, but evidently of a much later date. In some copies it bears the name of *Ionas Athraw o Fynyw*, or Ionas the Teacher of Menevia. It is called the *Awdl Fraith*, or Mottled Ode, on account of the Latin words with which the stanzas generally terminate. The following, from the commencement of the Ode, will suffice as a specimen of the style:

“YR AWDYL FRAITH.

Ef a wneth Panton
Ar lawr glyn Ebron
A'i ddwyllaw gwynion
Gwiwlun Adda, &c.”

“Panton made
On the ground of the Vale of Ebron,
With his blessed hands
The fair-formed Adam, &c.”*

It is then related how they were driven from Paradise; and there was given to them a spade to till the ground, also an angelic messenger brought to Eve some seed of Wheat, but she concealed the tenth part of it, and did not sow it. Afterwards when the concealed seed was sown, there came up black rye instead of wheat; and for this reason tithe should be paid. The Ode concludes with a prophecy concerning the destinies of Britain, and refers to the announcement made by the angel to Cadwaladr.

We shall now proceed to illustrate the foregoing observations by selections from the works of the Bards of this period, given in the *Myfyrian Archaology*.

MEILYR.

THE first Bard whose name presents itself to us during the period specified, is Meilyr, a Bard particularly deserving of notice; and that not so much on account of his genius, which did not rise above mediocrity, as for his being the first of the series of Bards who appeared at the new awakening of the

* See page 204.

eleventh century, and as being one, who, in his own compositions, exhibits the characteristics of the two styles—the torpor and prosaic tameness of the preceding era, and the spirit and energy of that which was then commencing: though it must be owned that the dulness of the tenth and preceding centuries is much more conspicuous in his compositions than is the fire of the twelfth.

Meilyr and his descendants also furnish a striking, and by no means usual instance of poetic genius continuing in the same family for three successive generations, and also of this talent running through its three stages of Rise, Culmination, and Decline. Meilyr was a composer tame and prosaic.—His son Gwalchmai was a poet of the highest order of genius, spirited and fiery.—His grandson, Einion ap Gwalchmai, again lost the fire and genius of his father, and sunk into the tameness of his grandfather Meilyr, as also did Meilyr ap Gwalchmai, Einion's brother.

The first composition of Meilyr, with which we are acquainted, is a short Ode, or Elegy, on the death of Trahacarn ap Caradawc, and Meilyr ap Rhiwallon, who were slain in the battle of Carno, in 1080. In the *Myfyrian Archaiology*, this composition is placed amongst the works of the twelfth century; but as it is clear, from internal evidence, that the Bard was an eye witness of the battle, as it is said that he composed the Elegy “in the expedition,” we cannot assign to it any other date than that of 1080, the year in which the battle took place; and as it was expressly ordered by the Welsh Laws, that it was the duty of the Royal Household Bard to attend the king to battle, and to sing the national strain before the engagement, we may suppose that Meilyr accompanied his sovereign in this capacity; and the shortness of the composition, which is only fourteen lines in length, together with the marks it bears of haste, and its abrupt and unconnected style, strongly confirm this opinion. The Ode and the occasion of its composition are as follows.

Gruffydd ap Cynan, being compelled to quit North Wales, took refuge in Ireland, from whence he returned with a strong body of Irish Scots, and having joined forces with Rhys ap Tewdwr, attacked Trahacarn, and defeated and slew him.

“Meilyr Brydydd a gant yr Awdl hon yn y lluydd y llas Trahaearn fab Caradawc, a Meilyr fab Rhiwallawn fab Cynvyn.”

“Gwolychaf ym Ren rex awyr, &c.”

“Meilyr the Poet sang this Ode, in the Expedition in which were slain Trahaearn the son of Caradawc, and Meilyr the son of Rhiwallawn son of Cynvyn.

“I adore my Sovereign, the king of Heaven, &c.”*

There is, in the style and construction of this Poem, a certain simplicity which indicates an unpractised composer. This want of skill must be in some measure attributed to the youth of the Poet; for as he composed an Elegy on Gruffydd ap Cynan, who died in 1137, he must have been but a youthful Bard in 1080. But it is more probable that the simplicity of style observable in the foregoing Ode, is chiefly attributable to the fact already alluded to, namely, the long period of Bardic torpor which had preceded its composition. As it appears that Meilyr is actually the first composer of the Bardic school, that arose with the revival of the *awen* in the eleventh century; therefore this composition becomes particularly interesting as exhibiting the transition from one state to the other, and Meilyr thus forms the connecting link; and also affords in himself a striking instance of the progressive state of intellect at this time: for after a lapse of fifty years we find that Meilyr's own style has undergone evident improvement, though there is so much left of his early character of simplicity, that we cannot refrain from inferring that his native torpor, the produce of the preceding era, was so strongly inherent, that even the general resuscitation of the advancing time was not able entirely to remove it. For in Meilyr's Elegy on Gruffydd ap Cynan in 1137, there is the same detail of circumstances—a feature not so conspicuous in the works of subsequent Bards—given with the same bare and unadorned statement of facts, and less of alliteration and artificial arrangement of expression. This Elegy consists of near 200 lines, and therefore is too long to insert the whole in this place, but the following extracts will give an idea of its character, and also of the improvement in style and poetic expression which had taken place. The Bard commences in the same religious and

* See page 192.

devotional strain, as in the preceding composition, as was the general practice of the middle age Bards; and conformable to the injunctions of the Welsh laws, that the Royal Household Bard should commence his official services with "a song to God."

"Rheen Nef mor rhyfedd ei ryfeddawd
Rhiau rwyf elfydd rhydd ei folawd, &c.
Rex rhadau fry o ryn fy nghardawd
Rheg rhydeiriu am ynn rhan drindawd."

"Sovereign of Heaven, how marvellous are his wonderful acts!—The king and governor of earth, extended is his praise!—The king of exalted blessings, I will ask a gift of the Trinity, &c. &c."

He then proceeds to eulogise Gruffudd ap Cynan with a good deal of poetic spirit and speaks of the Heavenly King who placed him on the throne:

"Gruffydd glew dywal ar orseddawd
Gwyr gwaie ei werin gwin eu gwirawd
Gwr a lywiau lu cyn bu breuawd
Blaidd byddin orthew yn derw blynghawd
Yr perigl preiddwyr peri ffosawd
Pascadur cynrain Prydain briawd
Handoedd cadgyffro a Andrawd
Ac ail o Run Hir ryfel durawd
Gwanai yn nghyngar eissor Medrawd
Mal Urien urdden ai amgyffrawd
Gweled ei ben lle ni bu defawd
Mur cadau neuaddau o ystyllawd
Cyn myned mab Cynan y dan dywawd
Ceffid yn ei gyntedd medd a bragawd
O olo Gruffydd yn rhudd feddrawd
Cwynym dragon dwfn dygn diwrnawd
Ergyr waew brwydryn cyn rhewin rhawd
Ryn ruthrai dorfoedd oedd rybarawd
Rygadedd Rhufain rheg addrwyndawd
Ni fynnai gamhur garw nebawd
I gymeryd llyw dotyw dyrnawd
Difa draig wron weinion wascawd
Gogwypo i Dduw o'i ddiweddawd
Nad el yn rygoll o'i holl bechawd."

Gruffydd, the intrepid hero—men of terror were his bands,—the man who marshalled armies before he became a corpse; the wolf of the host, silent within the obdurate oaken boards, [the coffin.] The endangerer of depredators, causing gashing; the nourisher of the valiant; the possessor of Britain. Sprung was the mover of battle from Anarawd, and a descendant of Rhun the Tall, steelled for war; he could engage in council like Medrawd; like the honoured Urien was his comprehension. We see his head where it was not wont to be, the bulwark of battle, in his dwelling of boards, [coffin.] Before the son of Cynan was placed beneath the earth, there was had in his hall,

mead and ale. From the covering up of Gruffydd in the red [earth] grave, we bewail the chieftain deeply this grievous day ; the warlike thruster of the spear, before his course was ended, who was prepared for the onset of the hosts, who received from Rome a gift of blessing ; who could not delight in any wrong. Since the blow has been given to take away the chief, to slay the valiant leader, the protection of the feeble, may God grant in the end, that he may be delivered from all his sin !

In the description of Gruffydd ap Cynan's battles, there occasionally occurs an approach to the more spirited style of the succeeding Bards, together with, here and there, an expression reminding us of the genius of the sixth century, clearly proving that Meilyr was acquainted with those compositions ; the following will suffice :

“Tyrfaï rhag llafnau pennau peithwydd
Caeth cwynynt cerddynt gan elfydd
Cnoynt frain friwgig o lid llawrudd
Llenwyd dwreawr i fawr faesydd
Delyd meirch amlw a biw elfydd
Gwen Gwygydd gwanai bawb yn eu gilydd
Gwaed gwyr goferai gwyrar onwydd
Or maint a dufu ar ei edrydd
A dug o'i gadau chwedlau newydd, &c.”

The chiefs of the land were in commotion from the spears ;
Prisoners wailed as they walked the ground ;
The ravens gnawed the mangled flesh, caused by the wrath of the slaughterer ;
Streams [of blood] were filled on many fields ;
Many-coloured horses were taken ; and cattle through the land !
At Gwengwygydd, each thrust at the other ;
The blood of men streamed, the ashen shafts bended ;
Those who returned of all his company
Brought from his army new reports, &c.

There is another composition of Meilyr, called his Death-bed Song, “Marw ysgafyn Feilyr Brydydd ;” in this composition he addresses the Almighty, and prays for a covenant with him, and proceeds to say, that after all his success and honour in his Bardic progress, he is at last reduced to silence :

“Cefais i liawsawr aur a phali
Gan freuawl rieu er eu hoffi
Ac wedy dawn awen amgen ynni
Amdlawd fy nhafawd ar fy nhewi.”

I have received abundance of gold and silk,
From mortal chieftains for extolling them ;
And after much energy of the gift of genius,
Poor is my tongue, and I am silenced.

He then calls himself a pilgrim to Peter, and speaks of his wish to be amongst the congregation of the Island of Enlli, (Bardsey,) where the

“Churchyard is surrounded by the bosom of the ocean.”

“Ac am y mynwent mynwes heli.”

Such is the character of the poetry of Meilyr; and although it is probable that these three Odes form but a small portion of his compositions, yet, as they comprise his earliest and his latest productions, we may conclude that they afford fair specimens of his genius; which began with the awakening of the *awen* in the eleventh century, and progressed with its increasing energies. And although it evidenced a decided influence towards the close of his life, yet, nevertheless, the innate torpor of the product of the preceding age was not to be removed entirely, even by the fire of the new resuscitation which was commencing. We shall now proceed to contemplate the altered aspect of the *awen* in the succeeding century.

GWALCHMAI SON OF MEILYR.

SHOULD the theory of the periodical tidal flow and ebb of genius hold good, we have in Meilyr an opportunity of contemplating the effects of the tidal rise during a period of nearly sixty years; and in his son Gwalchmai, we have the same tide of genius advancing to its height, during the succeeding forty years. This is not the place to enter into a discussion of so metaphysical a question as that of the cause and effects of poetic manifestations; but the writer persuades himself that the rise and decline of genius within a specific time, may be brought under notice, without infringing the conventional laws of writing, especially when this circumstance comprehends within its scope a fact so striking, as the same rise and decline of genius in three successive generations of the same family.

The date of Gwalchmai's birth is not known, nor that of his earliest composition: he is said to have flourished from about 1150 to 1190. This Bard appears to have inherited his father's poetical talent to its fullest extent, and to have possessed a higher degree of taste, and adopted a more culti-

vated style. The following Ode will afford a fair specimen of his genius. It was composed in 1157, in honour of the victory obtained by Owen Gwynedd, Prince of North Wales, over the troops of Henry the Second, on the shores of the Menai.

GWALCHMAI A'I CANT I OWAIN GWYNEDD.

"Ardwyreaf hael o hil Rodri, &c."

I will extol the generous hero of the race of Rhodri, &c.*

Gwalchmai has several other Odes to Owen Gwynedd, and other chieftains; but as they are on more general topics, and none of them upon any one single and particular subject, like the Battle of Menai, they cannot be so interesting to the reader of the present day, nor so intelligible without a good deal of circumlocution. The following Ode to Madoc ap Maredu, Prince of Powys, may serve as a sample.

ARWYRAIN MADAWG MAB MAREDUD. GWALCHMAI A'I CANT.

"Ardwyreaf deyrn eurgyrn adawd
Eisor cor.cwbldawn estrawn drullawd

Ystryw dra-mesur
Ysgawl pybl pobldur
Present penadur
Prysur durawd.

Prydain a danad
Prydyddion borthiad
Boed cyfoed dy rad
Ath wlad ath wawd.

Ethiw dy ergryd
Yn eithafoed byd
Arthur gadarnyd
Menwyd Medrawd.

Madawg maws odrud
Mygrfab Maredu
Meiriau drablud
Drablawd fosawd.

Ac yssid arnad ar neb uwy gnawd
Na mwy gronni eur nog erwaint flawd
Ni ryd rwysg eryr
Hyd troed o'i dymhyr
Yr ofyn herwyr
Yn herw ystawd.

Nyd haws yth esgar esgor dy gosbawd
Na chaffael tywyn ni bo tywawd
Nid oes gystedlyd
I hael hefelyd
Or a pyrth bedyd
A fyd a sawd.

* See pp. 194—8.

Nyd ydyw yn fyw
 Ni daw ni dodyw
 Ni chynhan ni chlyw
 Ni chlud molawd.

Hyd pan del Cynan cain adfwyndawd
 A Chadwaladr mawr mur pob ciwdawd."

AN EULOGY ON MADOC AP MEREDITH. GWALCHMAI COMPOSED IT.

I will extol the Prince ; the dispenser of the golden banqueting horns ; the shield of the host, of perfect endowment ; the harasser of the foe, of measureless penetration ; the active potent chief of the armed people of the land, vigorous and steel-clad.

Britain shall submit to thee, thou supporter of Poets, may thy prosperity be of equal duration with thy country and thy fame ! Thy dread has proceeded to the extremities of the world, thou hast the power of Arthur, and the talent of Medrod ; Madoc courteous and valiant, the splendid son of Meredith, in the turmoil of leaders, in the tumult of gashing, there is none more practised than thou art. No more would'st thou hoard up gold than thou would'st the blossom of the mountain weed. Not free is the course of the eagle a foot length from his abode, for fear of thy troops in the progress of their ranging. Not more easy is it for thy enemy to achieve thy punishment, than it is to find a beach where there is no sand : there is no competitor, there is no equal to this generous one, from the gates of Christendom as far as the world extends. There is not living, nor will he come, nor be appointed. Such will not be mentioned nor heard of, nor will poetic eulogy bear him forth, until Cynan arrives, of bright and gentle qualities, and the great Cadwaladr, the bulwark of each tribe.*

It appears that Gwalchmai was, in his youth, a gay and spirited warrior, and had served in many of the battles of the day ; and in the Poem called his favourite, "Gorhoffedd Gwalchmai," we have many allusions to such facts. The following will shew the style of the composition :

GORHOFFED GWALCHMAI. E HUN A'I CANT.

Mochdwyreawg huan haf dyfestin
 Maws llafar adar mygyr hyar hin
 Mi ydwyf eurdedf diofn yn uhrin
 Mi ydwyf llew rag llu lluch fy ngordin
 Gorwyllais nos yn adrodw fin
 Gorloes rydau dyfyr dygeu freidin
 Gorlas gwellt didrif dwfyr neud iesin
 Gordyar eaws awdyl gynefin.

Gwylan yn gware ar wely lliant
 Lleithrion eu pluawr pleidiau edrin
 Pellynig fy nghof y nghyntefin
 Yn ethryb caru Caerwys febin

* Cynan and Cadwaladr are two legendary personages, who, according to the predictions of Merlin and other Bards, are to appear amongst the Welsh.

Pell o Fon fain ydwyti dwythwal werin
 Esmwyth ysyd yn aserw gyfrin
 Yd endewais enau yn achlysur gwir
 Ar lleferyd gwâr gwery ei lain
 Ac er lles Owain hael hual dilyn
 Dychysgogan Lloegyr rag fy llain.

Llachar fy nghledau lluch yd ardwy—glew
 Llewychedig aur ar fy nghylchwy
 Cyfun westlawg dyfyr dyd gafy
 Cathl o ar adar awdl osymwy
 Gorfynnig fy mhwyll ymheill amgant
 Hedyw wrth athreidiaw tir tu efyrnwy
 Gorwyn blaen afall blodau fagwy
 Balch caen coed bryd pawb parth yd garwy.

Caraf Gaerwys fun fenediw deithi
 Cas genyf genthi ni gynhelwy
 Fy muner nid mawr i mi fy ngofwy
 Gwyn ei fyd padiw Duw yd ragwy
 Reinged rwyh wryr wared Lywy.

Llachar fy ngleddyf lluch ei anwyd
 Y'ngghad llewychedig aur ar fy ysgwyd
 Lliaws a'm golwch nym gwelsant er moed
 O rianed Gwent Gwyllt ym crybwyllleid
 Gwelais rag Owain Eingyl a'u hadoed
 Ac o du ribyll rebyd y'nggreid
 Gwalchmai ym gelwir gelyn y saeson
 Er lles Gwledig Mon gweint ym mhlymnwyd
 Ac er bod Llywy lliw eiry ar goed
 Pan fu aer rag caer cyforiais waed.

Gwaedreid fy nghledyf a godrud y'ngghad
 Y'ngghyfranc a Lloegr llawr nid ymgud
 Gwelais o arfod aerfab Gruffud
 Rialluoed trwch tebed ossud.

Gwaith Aberteifi tewyngad Owain, &c."

THE FAVOURITE OF GWALCHMAI.

Early-rising is the sun, hastening is the summer. Sweet the voice of birds in the brilliant season of song. I am one of golden qualities, fearless in battle; I am a lion before the host, bright is my impulse. I have kept watch throughout the night, guarding the border, by the murmuring fords of the angry waters of the Breiddyn. Green is the grass in the unfrequented spot, and is not the water clear?—loud is the nightingale with her practised song.

The sea-mews sporting on their bed of floods, gliding their plumage through the murmuring waves. Far distant are my thoughts in this season of spring, through loving the fair one of Caerwys.

Far from fair Mona art thou, with its peaceful people: there is repose and social confidence.

I have heard a report, and peradventure it may be true, that the courteous hero brandishes his spear. So that in the service of the generous Owen, when there shall be a continuous following, then shall Lloegr tremble before my blade.

Bright is my sword, gleaming in battle ; glittering and bright is the gold on my buckler.

Accordant and loud, as the pastime of the day, do I not enjoy the song of the birds,—a warbling ode ?

Aspiring is my mind on the distant border to-day, traversing the land on the banks of the Fyrnwy. Bright are the branches of the apple tree, with its clustering blossoms. Proud is the covering of woods ; the mind of each is in the quarter he loves.

I love the maid of Caerwys, of happy accomplishments ; unpleasant is it to me that I am not favoured by her. The maiden wears me away, this precious treasure slays me. At the word of my solicitation it is not much that I should be visited. Happy is he whom heaven protects ! Endued Lady, generous Virgin, guard thou Llywy !

Resplendent my sword, brilliant its temper, glittering in battle is the gold on my shield. Multitudes will extol me who have never beheld me. By the maidens of Sylvan Gwent, I shall be mentioned.

I have seen before Owen, the Angles in destruction, and on the banks of the Rhibyll, the destroyer in his fury. Gwalchmai, am I called, the foe of the Saxons ; in the service of the chief of Mona, active in battle, and for the sake of Llywy, of the hue of the snow upon the trees ; when the fight was in front of the castle, I poured out the blood.

Blood—gushing is my sword, red in battle ; in the encounter with Lloegr, was not the ground covered ?—I have seen from the stroke of the warlike son of Gruffydd, mangled hosts, a wondrous sight ! In the battle of Aberteivi, the ardent hosts of Owen, &c.

In this desultory style the Bard proceeds, making sudden transitions from his own private circumstances to the public services in which he was engaged ; sometimes indulging in reminiscences of peaceful scenes, and then apparently without any connection flying off to others of martial character. The following expressions are not separated from each other far, nor is there any thing to indicate a connecting idea :

“Gwelais yn Rudlan ruthr flam rag
Owain a chelaned rain a rud fehyr.

Endewais i eaws a'm ryhiraeth er gwyl.

Carafy yr ednan a'i llarian llais
Cathl fodawg coed cadr ei ethais.

Dymhunais tòn wyrdd wrth Aberfraw.

Endewaisi eryr ar ei giniaw, dyfyn
Dyraith Gwyned gwyar idaw.

Dymhunais tòn wyrdd wrth Aber Dau
Dychyrrh glan glaswyn glwys y frydau
Diessig yd gân ednan enau.

Adwen yfeisi fed a'i fenestri o aur
Yn llys Owain hir hwyr dilidau.

Y'ngwaith maesgarned gan freyrau. &c.”

I saw in Rhuddlan the rushing of flames before Owen, and spear-pierced carcasses and red lances, &c.

I listened to the nightingale, and melancholy makes me wakeful, &c.

I love the bird with its brilliant voice, solacing the wood with its chant of powerful impulse, &c.

I have been lulled to sleep by the green wave at Aberffraw, &c.

I have heard the eagle at his repast, when Gwynedd added blood to his banquet, &c.

I have been lulled to sleep by the green wave at Aber Dau, where the clear pellucid streams do meet, where unceasingly the voice of the bird is heard, &c.

I have drank mead from golden cups in the court of Owen.

In the battle of Maesgarneth I earned from nobles rewards poured into my hand, &c.

To what extent this composition may be formed of consecutive ideas, the lapse of time will scarcely admit of our forming an opinion. But whether it consists of a series of thoughts whose connection cannot now be traced, or is merely a concatenation of rambling and disjointed sentences, strung together according to the whim and eccentric humour of the Bard ; one thing is certain, that the language is highly cultivated, the diction exceedingly choice and poetical ; and we can only lament the apparent absence of unity of design, and the obscurity which pervades the whole.

CYNDELW.

ONE of the next Bards in point of time is Cynddelw, who wrote between 1150 and 1200. Many of his Poems are preserved, consisting of Odes of Eulogy addressed to several chieftains of the time, and also of Elegies. The style of this Bard is so exceedingly sententious and abrupt, and his language, from the absence of connecting particles, leaves so much to be supplied from the context, that in rendering the real meaning in another language, so much circulation must be used, that the work would be rather an interpretation than a translation. The following verses are less intricate, and also containing an original and striking idea, are here selected : they refer to the Death-wail, raised by the household of Madoc ap Meredith, Prince of Powys, throughout his territory, on the death of that Prince.

ENGLYNION A GANT CYNDELW I DEULU MADAWC MAB MAREDUDD,
PAN FU FARW MADAWC, AM GLYBOD EU GODWRYF.

"Godwryf a glywaf am glawr Maelenydd
Mur elfydd Elfán Gawr
Teulu Madawc mad anawr
Mal teulu ban Benlli Gawr.

Goduryf a glywaf am glaur Ieithon Hir
Hydr ei wyr ar Saeson
Teulu Madawc mur dragon
Mal twryf tormennoedd Cynon.

Godwrf a glywaf godor drain—wawawr
Gwae hwy Lloegyr yn nydd cain
Teulu Madawc mur Prydain
Yr llwythawc yn llithiaw brain.

Godwryf a glywaf am glawr llafur
Rei ryfel glod disegur
Teulu Madawc mawrglod mur
Mal gawr torf teulu Arthur.

Godwryf a glywaf am glaur Fagu—glyw
Glew Fadawc bieufu
Trinfa cyfa cynnyddu
Trydydd Tri Diweir Deulu
Tyll eu hysgwydawl terfysc fawr faon."

VERSES COMPOSED BY CYNDELW TO THE HOUSEHOLD OF MADOC, SON OF
MEREDITH, ON THE DEATH OF MADOC, WHEN HE HEARD THEIR WAIL.

A murmur I hear over the region of Maelienyth, the strong land of Elfán the powerful, the Household of Madoc, the beneficent and active, like the mighty household of Benlli Gawr.

A murmur I hear throughout the region of the long extending Ieithon; bold were his men against the Saxons, the Household of Madoc the protecting chief, like the tumult of the hosts of Cynon.

A murmur I hear, a tumult of pointed spears, woe to the men of Lloegyr in the day of arraying; the Household of Madoc, the bulwark of Britain, once harnessed, and aluring the ravens.

A murmur I hear throughout the land of those of martial renown, and energetic; the Household of Madoc, the chief of extensive fame, like the shout of tumult of the host of Arthur.

A murmur I hear along the region of the beauteous Vaga;* it is that of the valiant Madoc, in the full assembling in marshalled order.—The third of the three faithful tribes—Broken are their shields in the great encounter of hosts."

Cynddelw appears to have been himself an eye-witness of some of the conflicts which he describes; as in an Eulogy upon Rhys ap Gruffydd, Prince of South Wales, he says :

* The river Wye.

"Gweleis i gleis a threis a thrallawd
 Gleddyfal hywal hwyrnawd *
 Gweleis i glod a rhod a rhawd
 O beleidr a rheidr rhudd o gnawd."

I saw wounds, and violence, and distress,
 From the sword-stroke fierce and stern ;
 I saw glory, and advancing, and the charge
 Of spears, and crimson cataracts gushing from the flesh.

Again, in his Elegy upon Owen Gwynedd, he gives a description of one of that Prince's battles, though exaggerated, yet so graphic as to authorize a presumption that he had witnessed that, or some other similar scene.

"Gwyr heli Teifi tewychai
 Gwaedlan gwyr a llyr ai llanwai
 Gwyach rud gorfud goralwai
 Ar doniar gwyar gonofiai."

The green sea-brine of Teivy thickened,
 The blood of warriors, and the ocean wave swelled its tide;
 The red stained sea-mew rejoicing screamed,
 On a surge of gore it swam.

OWEN CEVEILIOC.—PRINCE OF POWYS.

1150—1197.

COTEMPORARY with the last two Bards was Owen Ceveilioc, Prince of Powys; a very extraordinary man, being a most spirited and gallant warrior, and also a Bard of the highest order of genius. Giraldus Cambrensis describes him as eloquent of speech, and ruling his territory with discretion. It also appears from this writer, that when Owen Ceveilioc was at peace with Henry the Second, he enjoyed the acquaintance of that accomplished monarch, which is no trifling pledge of his mental cultivation. There are but two compositions of this prince extant, one of them is the Poem called the *Hirlas*, or *Drinking Horn*; this Poem is supposed to have been composed after the battle of Crogen, in which Henry the Second was defeated by the confederate Princes of Wales, of whom Owen Ceveilioc himself was one. The subject is this: After the battle, the prince assembles his warriors at a banquet, and sends the Horn, filled with mead,

* Chwyrnawd ?

and wine to all of his warriors separately, with a complimentary address to each separately. The opening stanza is exceeding beautiful and striking.

THE HIRLAS OF CEVEILIOC.

This Poem is rather too long to be given entire, but a few extracts will be inserted as specimens of the style, and there is one passage so exceedingly beautiful and original, so dramatic and effective, that it must not by any means be passed unnoticed. The real sense of the passage, appears to have been first pointed out by Sharon Turner, and it is surprising, &c.*

HYWEL AP OWAIN.

ONE of the next Bards in point of time, is Howel the son of Owen Gwynedd, who, on the death of his father in 1169, claimed the throne of North Wales, and after occupying it about a twelve-month, was slain in battle. He was a warlike and enterprising character, and celebrated for his skill in conducting sieges, and the taking of castles. Cynddelw alludes to his taking the castle of Cynfael :

“Twrwf Tonn Torchawc Hael trwm oedd y glywel
Twr Cynvael yn cwyddaw
A flameu odrum yn edrinaw
Ac angerdd oc ongyr yn llaw.”

Like the tumult of the wave was that of the torqued chief,
heavy was the sound
Of the tower of Cynfael falling ;
And the ridgy flames loud echoing,
And vehemence, and the spear in hand.

The Poems of Hywel ap Owain, are but few in number, and those but short, and obscure ; yet from the style, we may conclude that he possessed a cultivated taste, together with considerable genius. It has been supposed that this prince cherished some of the tenets of Druidism, and that he alludes to them under the description of beautiful females : but others think, with greater probability, that the objects of the Bard's devotion were not so spiritual and abstracted. The Poem of the greatest length is that called his *Gorhoffedd*, i. e. his *Delight*, or *Favorite*, and which like that of the same title by Gwalchmai, already referred to, appears to be an

incoherent and unmeaning concatenation of poetic expressions; such as to make one suspect that the *Gorhoffedd* was a mere rhapsody, formed of unconnected thoughts, the favourite ideas of the Bard, thrown together without regard to any consecutive order. The difficulty is to reconcile this confusion with the elegance of diction, and poetic excellence which each sentence possesses in itself. The following is the beginning of this Poem :

"GORHOFFED HYWEL AP YWEIN.

Tonn wenn orewyn a orwlych bet
 Gwytua ruuawn behyr benn teyrnet
 Caraf trachas Lloegyr lleudir goglet hetiw
 Ac am amgant y lliw lliaws callet
 Caraf am rotes rybued met
 Myn y dyhaet myr meith gywrysset
 Caraf y theilu æ thew anhet yndi
 Ac wrth fot y ri rwyfaw dyhet
 Caraf y morfa æ mynytet
 Ae chaer ger y choed æ chein diret
 Ae dolyt æ dwuyr æ dyffrynnet
 Ae gwylein gwynnyon æ gwypn wroget
 Caraf y milwyr æ meirch hywet
 Ae choed æ chedym æ chyuannet
 Caraf y meusyt æ man feillyon arnaw
 Myn yd gauas faw fyrty oruolet
 Caraf y brooet breint hywret
 Ae diffeith mawrueith æ marannet
 Wy a un mab duw mawr a ryuet
 Mor yw eilon mygyr meint y reuet
 Gwneuthum a gwth gwaew gweith arderchet
 Y rwg glyw powys a glwys wynet
 Ac y ar welw gann gynnif rysset
 Gorpwyf ollygdawd o alltudet
 Ny dalyaf diheu yny del ymplaid
 Breutwyd æ dyweid a duw æ met
 Tonn wenn orewyn a orwlych bet
 Tonn wenn orewyn wychyr wrth dreuyt
 Gyfliw ac arien awr yd gynnyt
 Caraf y morua y Meiryonny, &c."

THE GORHOFFEDD OF HOWEL SON OF OWEN.

The white wave, high-covered with foam, drenches the grave, the tumulus of Rhufon Befyr, Chief of Kings.

I love this day the bright region of the north, the land hated of Lloegyr, the territory of the chieftain of the prudent multitude. I love the land where I was supplied with the wished for mead, by the worthy bulwark of wide spread contests.

I love its people and its dense dwellings within it, and under the sway of the prince ruling in prosperity.

I love its sea-marsh, and its mountains, and its castle by the wood, and its valleys; and its white sea-mews, and its brilliant dames.

I love its warriors, and its steeds of noble aspect, and its woods and fortresses, and its mansions. I love its fields, covered with the tiny trefoils, where I obtained glory of lasting fame.

I love its plains of heroic dignity, and its great extensive wilds and its strands. How vast and splendid is the wealth it contains!

I achieved with the thrust of the spear an honourable act, betwixt the puissant Powys and the pleasant Gwynedd. And upon the war-horse, through the toil of battle, may I obtain deliverance from my banishment! I will hold nothing as certain unless this comes to pass on my behalf. A dream has told it, and God has it in his power.

The white wave covered with foam wets the grave. The white wave covered with foam, powerful in its counter ebbing, of the hue of the hoar-frost in the hour of its flow.

I love the marsh in Meirionyth, &c.

LLYWARCH AB LLYWELYN.

THE next Bard that comes under our notice is Llywarch ab Llewelyn, called *Prydydd Moch*, the Rapid Poet; he flourished from 1160 to 1220. There are several of his compositions extant, the following will serve to illustrate his style:

“AWDL A GANT PRYDYT Y MOCH Y CUFFUT AP CYNAN.

Rac rwy dygannwy dygynwyre glyw
O uon hyd uynyw llyw llu agde
• Dy ryd y doryf dy re orwydawr
Hyd y llewych llawr gwawr gwymp fore
Dychymysc airffysc yn aryfle aedur
Ae gledyf flamdur ay glot dyre
Mab medel yteyrn heyyrn dy he
Gruttud teyrud tut elisse.”

ODE TO GRIFFITH AP CYNAN, GRANDSON OF OWEN GWYNEDD.

Before the chief of Deganwy, heroes arise

From Mona to Menevia—leader of the resistless host.

His army and his steeds will proceed

As far as earth is illumined by the radiant dawn of morning.

He mingles in the tumult in the weapon-place of steel bucklers,

With his sword of flaming steel and his extended fame,

Son of the reaping of trumpets, of the wide spread iron implements,

Gruffyth, the royal chief of the land of Elissai, &c.

Without much circumlocution or explanatory insertions, the first lines of this Ode are intelligible enough; but towards the last part it requires explanation, as *the son of the reaping of trumpets* is, in its literal rendering, but very obscure; and in order to arrive at its meaning, we must understand that the word *medel*, a reaping, does not signify the mere

act of the cutting of grain by one person, or a few individuals, but it implies the general reaping festival still kept up in Wales; in which the inhabitants of a whole district assemble to assist some particular neighbour to cut down his wheat; when the day is passed in exertion and emulation, by those employed; so that to a Welshman of the twelfth century, the reaping of the field of battle by the sound of trumpet was a very significant expression, and greatly enhanced by the iron implements introduced: and the term red-reaping of war, *rhuddfedel rhyfel*, was used by Aneurin as early as the sixth century, to denote the bloody harvest. So that much of the figurative language of the Bards must necessarily lose its effect in a translation.

LLYWARCH LLEW CAD.

BEFORE noticing other Poems which are given as succeeding those of the last Bard, it will be but right to restore to his proper place a Bard of some originality of talent, called in the Myfyrian, Llywarch Llaety, and placed betwixt the years 1290 and 1340; but who calls himself Llywarch Llew Cad, and evidently wrote as early as 1159, as the object of his Eulogy was slain in that year.

“Gofynnwys nebun ny bu raen gan rei, &c.”

VERSES TO LLEWELYN, SON OF MADAWC AP MEREDITH, WHO WAS SLAIN
IN 1159, BY LLYWARCH LLEW CAD.

Has no one asked?—Have none been anxious to know, &c.*

PERYF AP CADIFOR.

THERE is extant another composition, in the same metre, by an anonymous Bard, who, from internal evidence, must have been Peryf ap Cadifor. This piece was composed soon after the death of Prince Howel, the son of Owen Gwynedd, who was slain in 1169; the Bard was one of seven brothers, partisans and foster-brothers of Howel, who were all present in the action, and four of them fell there.

This Ode, composed by a person who does not appear to have borne any rank, but as a private individual rendered his services in the field to his party, with the most fervid

* See pp. 200, 201.

enthusiasm, illustrates in an eminent manner, the daring and fearless spirit, together with the patriotic ardour which pervaded the Principality at that time, cherished by all ranks of people, whether Bards or warriors, and which is described by Giraldus Cambrensis, who says, that—

“The whole nation is devoted to war; for here not merely the nobles, but the whole people are trained to arms; and when the trumpet sounds, the peasant rushes to arms from his plough, with no less alacrity than the nobleman from his hall.—Nor are they occupied with any except martial exercises. They study the defence of their country and of their liberty. For their country they fight, for their liberty they toil; for which it appears to them delightful, not only to combat in arms, but also to surrender their life; hence they consider it disgraceful to die in bed, but an honour to die in battle.”*

AWDYL GAN PERYF AP CADIFOR.—1169.

“Tra fuam yn seith triseith nyn beitei, &c.”†

ODE, PROBABLY BY PERYF AP CADIFOR.

Whilst we lived, we seven, three sevens would not defeat us, &c.

DAFYDD BENFRAS,

1190—1240.

Amongst the eulogists of Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, was Dafydd Benfras, a Bard of considerable poetic spirit, as may be seen in the following Ode :

“Gŵr a wnaeth llewych o’r gorllewin
Haul a lloer addoer addef iessin
Am gwnel radd uchel rwyf cyf-ychwyn
Cyflawn awen awydd fyrdin
I ganu moliant mal Aneirin gynt
Dydd y cant Ododin.
I foli gwyndawd gwyndyd werin
Gwynedd bendefig ffynnedig ffin
Gwanas deyrnas deg cywrenhin
Gwreidd teyrneidd taer ym mrwydrin
Gwrawl ei flamdo am fro freiddin
Er pan oreu Duw dyn gyssefin
Ni wnaeth ei gystal traws arial trin
Gorug Llywelyn onllin—teyrnedd
Ar y brenhinedd braw a gorddin
Pan fu’n ymbrofi a brenhin Lloegr,
Yn llygru swydd Erbin.”

* “—Gens armis dedita tota; non enim nobiles hic solum, sed totus populus ad arma paratus est; bellica tuba sonante non ægnius ab aratro ruricola, quam aulicus ab aula prorumpit ad arma.—nec ullo prorsus nisi martio labore vexantur, patriæ tamen tutelæ student et libertatis, pro patria pugnant, pro libertate laborant, pro quibus non solum ferro dimicare, verum etiam vitam dare dulce videtur.” Descriptio Cambriæ, Cap. VIII.—EDITOR.

† See Pages 201, 202.

He who formed the light from the extremity of the firmament, the sun, and the cold moon ; He of the resplendent dwelling, may he grant me a high degree in the impulse of intellectual light ; a perfect inspiration, the ardent will of Merlin, to sing a song of praise, like Aneurin of old, the day he sang the Gododin ; to celebrate the blessing of the Venedotian people, the Ruler of Gwynedd, of enlarging boundary, the buttress of his kingdom ; manly, royal, daring in battle ; impetuous his conflagration through the territory of the Breithin.—Since God first created man, he formed not his equal in the active movement of combat. Llewelyn, of the race of Princes, has caused to kingly assailants terror and rout. When he was contending for superiority with the king of England, devastating the land of Erbin.

“Oedd breisg weisg ei fyddin
 Oedd brwysg rwysg rhac y godorin
 Oedd balch gwalch golchidd ei lain
 Oedd beilch gweilch gweled ei werin
 Oedd clywed cleddyfau finfin
 Oedd clybod clwyf ym mhob elin
 Oedd briw rhiw yn nhrabludd oi drin
 Oedd braw saw Saeson clawdd y Cnwckin
 Oedd bwlch llafn yn llaw gynnefin
 Oedd gwaedllyd pennau gwedy gwaedlin
 Rhyw—yn rhedeg am deulin
 Llywelyn ein llyw cyffredin
 Llywiawdwr berth hyd borth Ysgewin
 Ny ryfa gystal Gwstennyn ac ef
 I gyfair pob gorllin
 Mi ym byw pe byddwn dewin
 Ym marddair mawrddawn gyssefin
 Adradd ei ddaed aerdrin ni allwn
 Ni allai Daliessin
 Cyn adaw y byd gyd gyfryn
 Gan hoedl hir ar dir daerin
 Cyn dyfynfedd ysgyrnwedd ysgrin
 Yn daer dyfnlas ar lessin
 Gwr a wnaeth or dwfr y gwin
 Gan fodd Duw a diwedd gwirin
 Nog a wnaethbwyd treis anwyd trin
 Ym mhresent ym mhryssur orllin
 Ni warthaer hael am merthefin nos
 A nawdd Saint boed cyfrin.”

Powerful and active was his army,
 Vehement was his course in front of the tumult,
 Proud was the hero of the washing of his blade,
 Proud were the warriors to see his retinue ;
 There was the hearing of swords edge to edge,
 There was the feeling of a wound in every limb,
 Bruised was the steep from the trampling of his host,
 Dismayed stood the Saxons at the ditch of Cnockin,
 Notched was the blade in the hand of the veteran :
 Bloody were heads after the rush of blood
 Streaming to the knees.

Llewelyn our general leader, a splendid chieftain, even to Porth Yscewin. Constantine was not equal to him in opposing every assault.

I throughout my life, were I prophet, in Bardic enunciation, in mighty primitive inspiration, recount his merits in battle I could not—Talesin could not. Before he quits his communion with the world, may he enjoy a long life in this earthly habitation. Before he is placed in his coffin, in the deep bone-decorated grave ; before he goes to the deep verdure-clad earth, may He that made the water to be wine, by the will of God and a holy end, grant that what he has done of evil by the force of sin in this fleeting generation, may not cause the chieftain to be confounded by overwhelming night ; and may the protection of the Saints be his inheritance !

The Bards of this period often exhibit instances of this desultory descriptive style, in short and sententious repetitions of the same idea: we find an instance in a Poem by Llywarch ap Llewelyn, called *Y Prydydd Moch*, already named, to Llewelyn ap Iorwerth.

“Porth aethwy pan aetham y ar
Meirch mordwy uch mawrdwryf tonnyar
Oet ongyr oet engir eu bar
Oet angut gwaedrut gwaedryar
Oet engyrth yn hynt oet agcar
Oet yg oet agheu an cymar
Oet amheu yr byd bod abar
O honom o heneint lleithyar.”

When we went to Porthaethwy
On the steeds of the ocean over the tumultuous waves,
There were spears, there was awful wrath ;
There was conspicuous gushing of the red blood ;
There was pervading terror, there was hatred ;
There was anguish, there was death unequalled ;
There was general doubting that a single corpse
Of us would be made by the death of old age.”

A not very dissimilar train of thought and expression may be seen in Lord Byron's description of the eve of the Battle of Waterloo :

“Ah ! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears and tremblings of distress, &c.”
“And there were sudden partings, such as press, &c.”
“And there was mounting in hot haste : the steed,
The mustering squadron and the clattering car, &c.” *

This practice of repeating a particular word, became very general amongst the Bards of this period, and when had recourse to in moderation, has a good effect ; but in many instances it was carried to excess, as was also the use of alliteration, especially towards the close of this era of poetry ;

* Mr Price has taken these disjointed lines from *Childe Harold*. Canto III. Stanzas 24 and 25.—EDITOR.

nevertheless, there were several Bards, who had sufficient good taste to resist the vicious tendency of the age.* Amongst such exceptions, we may place some of the works of Elidir Sais, a Bard who flourished from 1160 to 1220, as may be seen in an Elegy on Ednyfed Fychan, and Tegwarded ap Iarddur, the first part of which is as follows :

ELIDIR SAIS.

“MARWNAD I EDNYFED FYCHAN A TEGWARED AP IARDDUR.

Uwch ben bedd newydd Ednyfed y bam
 Ym bu deigr hyd arffed
 Cymraw Lloegr cymrwyn lliwed
 Cymran oed wychran weithred.
 Gweithred Tegwarded gynt y gweryd llawr
 Llawen beird o'i wynfyd
 Gnawd oedd ei wayw yn waedlyd
 O waedlan rhuddai wan rhyd.
 Rhodwyt ar gymryd oedd ar gymran llu
 Llary Ednyfed Fychan
 Oedd Bann Gawr am ben garthan
 Pan gafas aerwas eurwan, &c.”

ELEGY ON EDNYFED FYCHAN AND TEGWARED AP IARDDUR.

Above the new grave of Ednyfed I stood,
 The tears flowed to my bosom—
 The terror of Lloegr ; of the subduing throng,
 Complete in liberality, valiant in action.

The actions of Tegwarded, before he went to the earth—
 Joyful were the Bards in his success,
 Often was his spear blood-stained
 From the stream that flowed from the gory thrust.

The leader of the concourse in the assembled host
 Was the gentle Ednyfed Fychan,
 Loud was the shout on the height of Garthan,
 When the warrior received his wound, &c.”

There is also an Ode by the Prydydd Bychan, in which the excessive and laboured alliteration, already alluded to, is very strongly marked, but which, nevertheless, through the skill and genius of the Poet, possesses such sweetness of diction, together with coherence of ideas, as to produce a very pleasing effect. The Ode is as follows :

* Amongst the abettors of this style, we cannot exempt Cynddelw, though he does not carry the practice to such excess as many subsequent Bards.

"MARWNAD RHYS IEUANC. Y PRYDYDD BYCHAN AE CANT.

Colled gwr arwr aruawc chwyrn yg cad
Yg cadarnwisc heyrn
Mur toryf aerdoryf eurdeyrn
Mygyr bennaeth mab maeth metgyrn.

Mab metgyrn teyrn tawel ut mwynuawr
Cyn maenuet y orchut
Mab mad mygyr lleityad llaunrnut
Brwysc breinyawr gretuawl gruffut.

Mab gruffut llaunrnut lluoet gyrcheid
Rys gyrchyad tra moroed
Gwrt am deruyn amhyl doruoet
Gwr bytin gwawr bytinoet.

Bytinoet hartoet dyt y hyrtei rys
Ciwdawd ros o hanei
Lleith cynuygyn cynnetyf gwalmchmai
Llew gawr ysgwyduawr ys gwnei.

Ys gwnai Rys ar urys arlwy gwlet branhes
Cyn prynu tangnhefet
Par tridryll gwersyll gorssset
Penn clod cyn noe fod yw fet.

Y met argyuet nyd gouyget teith
Doeth y feirt oe fyned
Am ysgwyt gawr fawr fur cet
Am ysgwyd friwdoll gollet.

Colled gwr arwr, &c."

ELEGY ON RHYS THE YOUNGER, BY THE PRYDYDD BYCHAN, 1223.

Lost is the armed exalted hero, fierce in battle ;
In his iron vestment of strength,
The bulwark of the host, the war-host of gold-decorated Princes ;
The splendid chieftain, the foster-son of mead-horns.

Son of the mead-horns, a gentle Prince, a courteous sovereign was he,
Before the stone sepulchre became his covering ;
Worthy and honourable, the red-blade slaughterer,
The energetic, noble, high-spirited son of Gruffyth.

The red-blade son of Gruffyth, the leader of the bands of Rhos,
Rhys of the distant expeditions;
Defender of his boundaries, of numerous hosts,
The chief of warriors, the dawn of armies.

The fair-arrayed armies, on the day that Rhys charged with them,
When the men of Rhos proceeded forth,
A carnage of his enemies equal to that of Gwalchmai,
Would the large-shielded lion of battle commit.

Quickly would Rhys provide a feast for the ravens,
Before he would purchase peace ;

The spear would be splintered in fragments
By the chief of fame, before he departed to his grave.

In the mead carousal it was not a joyful event

That befel the Bards at his departure ;

For the giant shoulder, the great bulwark of prosperity,
For the broken shield, there is the lamenting the loss.

Lost is the, &c.

Amongst the compositions of this period, there are a few Poems bearing the date of 1250; by "Y Brawd Fadawc ap Gwallter;" The Brother, that is the Friar, Madoc ap Gwallter. To what religious order this Friar belonged, we are not informed; but he appears to have been a man of piety, as far as can be ascertained from his expressions, and certainly was possessed of considerable talent and power of composing. The following are extracts from one of his Poems:

"Y BRAWD FADAWG A'I CANT I DDUW.

Gwared arnaf Naf nawdd am rhoddych
Gwan wyf im nerthwyf fy neirhiad fych
Gwareder llawer lle gwaredych raid
Gwaredwr gweiniaid gwae ni gerych
Sef yw gwander ner nid nas gwypych
Salw ym gelu pan y gwelych, &c.

Tithau yr enaid paid nam pedych
Tro o ffyrdd didro yd tra geffych
Tyn droed dy feddwl tra feddych dy bwyll
O blith maglau twyll tywyll eu rhych
Dyfodiad gwastad gwir ystrych
Dy fonedd ar wedd y harweddych
Dybyed aeddfed faddeuych yn gall
Dy anian ddeall a ddyellyph
Gloyw degach no'r aur yngwaith eurych
Ath luniaidd creawdd hawdd y crettych
Ei eilun ei hun honnych ei arddelw
Ac oi deg wirddelw yr arddelwych, &c.

Nid unwaith na dwy dolurych bob awr
Namyn yn rhyfawr a ryfynnych
A wneych o ddrwg a ddiwygych
Gwedi cant cymmod cymydych unwaith
Herwydd cariad maith hyd na methych
Disgwyliaw yr awr elych or cnawd
Na fydd amharawd pan ammherych.
Gwaed Iessu a fu gwaed eu a cwynych
Gwirdda ystoria pan ystyrych
Griddfana ocha fal uch yn beichiaw
Pan fo yn cwynaw gwae ei gydych
Iessu deg Iessu im dangosych
Dy wyneb-ni heb a ohebrych
Na rhudd du ddeurudd diddorych oth was
Gwaer neb a gas a geffych, &c.

Ath folaf Duw naf nefoedd lewych
 Pwy nith fawl or sawl a ry seilych
 Ith foliant soniant son clych a llyfrau
 Cerddau telynu cras dannau crych
 Nef daear uffern pan y bernych
 Dod nod im hwyneb am hadneppych.
 Parth clet i minnau ni mynnych fy mod
 Parth yr oen gorfod im gossodych
 Pan ddel y trillu trallawd berych
 I leaws yn draws a drais boenych
 Ith lu di difri difrych gwynoleu
 Ar y llaw dehau i'm lleheych. Amen."

AN ODE TO GOD, BY THE BROTHER MADOC,—1250.

Deliver me ; Lord, thy protection render me,
 Weak am I, may I be strengthened, be thou my strengthener !
 Many shall be saved, where thou deliverest it must be,
 The rescuer of the feeble : woe to those thou lovest not !
 Such is my weakness, Lord, thou art not ignorant of it,
 Base am I accounted by thee, when thou beholdest me, &c.

And thou, my soul, cease, I beseech thee ;
 Turn from the unturning roads whilst thou hast power ;
 Pull the foot of thy mind whilst thou possessest thy reason,
 From the midst of the snares of deceit ; dark their concealment !
 Consider the even way of truth ;
 Order thy conduct with propriety.
 Luxurious ideas do thou wisely abandon,
 Understand thou the nature of thy intellect.
 Bright and fairer than the gold in the work of the goldsmith,
 Did thy Creator form thee, do thou readily believe ;
 To His own form dost thou possess a claim,
 And his fair true image dost thou exhibit, &c.

Not once, nor twice ; do thou lament each hour,
 And greatly do thou desire
 To reform the evil thou dost commit ;
 After a hundred reconciliations be thou reconciled once ;
 That thou fail not of extended love,
 Watch for the hour thou shalt depart from the flesh ;
 Be not thou unready when thou art commanded.
 The blood of Jesus has been [shed] that beloved blood shalt thou
 bewail ;

When thou shalt consider his truthful history,
 Groan, lament like an ox that lows
 When he bemoans the distress of his fellow ox.
 Jesus, kind Jesus, shew to me
 Thy countenance, and not without thy communion ;
 Let not thy cheeks be reddened with anger against thy servant ;
 Woe to him whosoever shall meet thy hatred, &c.

I will praise thee oh God, Lord of the resplendent heaven,
 Who will not praise thee of those whom thou establishest ?
 Thy praise is sounded forth from bells and books,
 Songs, and harps of loud light drawn strings,
 Heaven, earth, and hell, when thou judgest,

Place a mark on my face whereby thou shalt know me ;
 On the left hand do not thou cause me to be ;
 With the suffering Lamb do thou place me !
 When three hosts shall come, when thou causest affliction,
 When thou dost sentence to punishment,
 With thy glorious host, spotless and bright,
 On thy right hand do thou place me ! Amen.

The last specimen of this century that shall be noticed, is from an Elegy, by Gruffydd ap yr Ynad Coch, on Llewelyn ap Gruffydd, the last of the Welsh Princes, who was slain in 1282.

MARWNAD LLEWELYN AP GRUFFYDD, GAN GRUFFYDD AP YR YNAD COCH, 1282.

“Oer galon dan fron o fraw allwynin
 Am frenin dewin dor Aberffraw
 Aur dilyfn a delid oi law
 Aur dalaeth oedd deilwng iddaw
 Eurgyrn aur deyrn n'im daw llawenydd
 Llywelyn nid rhydd i'm rhwydd wisgaw
 Gwae fi am Arglwydd gwalch diwradwydd
 Gwae fi o'r aflwydd ei dramgwyddaw
 Gwae fi o'r gollod gwae fi or dynged
 Gwae fi or clydd fod clwyf arnaw, &c.”

AN ELEGY BY GRUFFYDD AP YR YNAD COCH, ON LLEWELYN AP GRUFFYDD.

Cold is the heart within the bosom, from dismay and sorrow
 For the sacred King, the protector of Aberffraw ;
 Glittering gold was dispensed by his hand ;
 The golden diadem was he worthy of,
 The splendid sovereign of the golden horns ! Joy comes no more
 to me ;
 Llewelyn is not in existence, to present me with apparel ;
 Woe is me for the lord, the reproachless hero ;
 Woe, for the misfortune of his fall !
 Woe, for the loss, woe for the destiny ;
 Woe, for the rumour of his receiving his wound, &c.”

The remainder of the composition consists of a succession of expressions of lamentation, with strong marks of the style of the time, a repetition of some favourite word or idea for several lines consecutively ; as for instance :

“Llawer deigr hylithr yn hwylaw ar rudd
 Llawer ystlys rhudd a rhwyg arnaw
 Llawer gwaed am draed wedi ymdreiddiau
 Llawer gweddw a gwaedd y andanaw
 Llawer meddwl trwm yn tomrwyaw
 Llawer mab heb dad gwedi ei adaw
 Llawer hendref fraith gwedi llwybrgodaith
 A llawer diffaith drwy anrhaith draw
 Llawer llef druan fal ban fu'r Gamlan
 Llawer deigr dros ran wedi'r greiniaw.”

Many a trickling tear passes over the cheek,
 Many a side is red with the gash upon it,
 Many a one with blood on his feet after the mutual piercing,
 Many a widow with her wail for the event ;
 Many a mind heavy with sorrowing,
 Many a son left without a father,
 Many a dwelling discoloured by the course of conflagration ;
 And many a desert made by yonder ravage,
 Many a woeful cry, as when the battle of Camlan took place ;
 Many a tear over the eyelash after the weltering in blood, &c.

GWILYM DDU.

WE come now to the last Bard within the prescribed limits of this Essay, Gwilym Ddu of Arfon, who wrote about 1323. The following extracts are from an Ode to Sir Gruffydd Llwyd, of Trefgarnedd, and Dinorweg in Arfon, who had been taken prisoner, and confined in Rhuddlan Castle.

GWILYM DDU O ARFON I SYR GRUFFYDD LLWYD, PAN OEDD YNGHARCHAR
 YNGHASTELL RHUDDLAN.

“ Rhen trindawd a rawd eirf ynghystudd
 Rywneuthost am bost neddeirgost nudd
 Rhiau rhad barau beri gorchudd llew
 Caer galchdew glew glyw ddaddannudd
 Rhyflin yw attal llwydd arial lludd
 Rhy flwng yw echwng echel ddeurudd
 Rhy flaengar aerddar urddawl roddfudd hael
 Rheflac wael rwysg Mael er cael cyhudd
 Rhyfedd yw yn fyw feirdd n'in dyhudd
 Ei fod reiniad clod cledren flaen rhudd
 Rhi Dinorweg deg dygn ryfudd Gwynedd
 Gan Sacson, &c.”

GWILYM DDU OF ARFON TO SIR GRUFFYDD LLWYD, WHEN IMPRISONED IN
 RHUDDLAN CASTLE.

Sovereign Trinity ! affliction hast thou caused to the leader of the armed course ; to the supporter liberal-handed as Nuth ; to him of kingly courtesy, the commander of spears ; the protecting lion ; the strong magnificent fortress, the excellent chief. Distressing is the obstructing of the course prosperous as that of Lludd,—gloomy is the closing in prison of the once cheering countenance. The daring oak of battle, honourable and generous ; by so low a mischance that he of the progress of Mael should suffer degradation ! It is wonderful that we Bards should continue to live, when the chief of fame, of the red-pointed shaft, the Prince of Dinorweg, the goodly leader of Gwynedd, remains in the power of the English, &c.

PROSE LITERATURE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the many works which may be supposed to have been lost, the Welsh are still in possession of some very interesting remains of this period in Prose, though by

no means so numerous as those of the Bards. The principal prose works extant are, the Welsh Chronicle of Caradoc of Llancarfan; the Brut of Geoffrey of Monmouth; and the Mabinogion, or Mythological and Romantic Tales of the Welsh. There are also numerous Biographical works, consisting chiefly of Lives of Saints; and one or two works on Music, and Medicine; the latter containing the practice of Rhiwallon, Physician to Rhys ap Gruffydd, Prince of South Wales in the twelfth century.

The Chronicle of Caradoc of Llancarfan, to which Geoffrey of Monmouth gives priority of date over the Brut, which he himself translated,* was originally written by Caradoc, in the twelfth century, and afterwards continued by some other hand to the end of the thirteenth. It is written entirely in the Welsh language, and constitutes the basis of Welsh history subsequent to the seventh century: prior to which time, Geoffrey of Monmouth professes to give the history of the British kings, and to be the sole possessor of the materials from which such history is drawn. His words, at the conclusion of the Brut, are the following; and are important as establishing the age in which Caradoc wrote.

“The Kings of the Welsh, who from that time have succeeded them in Wales, I leave their history to Caradoc of Llancarfan, my contemporary; as I do also the Kings of the Saxons, to William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon; but I charge them to be silent concerning the Kings of the Britons, as they have not that book in the British tongue which Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, brought out of Britain; which being a true history, edited in honour of the aforesaid Princes, I have thus translated into Latin.”

“Reges autem illorum qui ab illo tempore in Gualliis successerunt: Karadoco Lancarbanensi contemporaneo meo, in materia scribendi permitto. Reges vero Saxonum Guillelmo Malmesberiensi et Henrico Huntingdonensi: quos de regibus Britonum tacere jubeo, cum non habeant illum librum Britannici sermonis, quem Gualterus Oxinefordensis Archidiaconus ex Britannia advexit: quem de historia eorum veraciter editum in honore prædictorum principum, hoc modo in Latinum sermonem transferre curavi.”

The Chronicle of Caradoc is, generally, termed, Brut y Tywysogion, *The Brut of the Princes*, to distinguish it from that of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and which is called Brut y Brenhinoedd, or *The Chronicle of the Kings*, as it refers to

* Priority to the translation, not to the Brut itself.—EDITOR.

the Sovereigns of Britain ; whereas that of Caradoc is confined to the Princes of Wales, and commences with the death of Cadwaladr, and the accession of Ifor the son of Alan, in the seventh century.

As Geoffrey of Monmouth gives the precedence to the work of Caradoc, with regard to the date of its publication, we have noticed it as such. And we now come to the work of Geoffrey, the history of which is as follows :—

Early in the twelfth century, Walter Mapes, or as he is otherwise called, Walter Calenius,* Archdeacon of Oxford, while in Armorica, met with a history of Britain, written in the ancient British language, which he brought with him to Britain, and placed in the hands of Geoffrey of Monmouth, (whose Welsh name was Gruffydd ap Arthur,) in order to its being translated into Latin ; this Geoffrey undertook to do, and afterwards published, with a dedication to Robert, Earl of Gloucester, son of Henry I.†

Though the original British work, which Geoffrey translated, is not known to be extant, yet there is a Welsh copy of the Brut, of the same age with the Latin, and evidently a translation from it ; and which, from the concluding sentence, appears to have been translated into Welsh at the instance of Walter Mapes. The words are these :

“I, Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, translated this book out of Welsh into Latin. And in my old age I translated it the second time out of Latin into Welsh.”

“Myfi Gwallter Archiagon Rydychen a droes y llyfr hwn o Gymraec yn Lladin. Ac yn fy henaint y troes i ef yr ail waith o Ladin ynghymraec.”

The words will bear the construction that this Walter was himself the actual translator of the Welsh copy : but when we recollect he was only the means of causing the first translation into Latin to be made, it appears probable that he speaks of his services with regard to the second translation into Welsh, in the same manner.‡

* It has been supposed that these names belong to different persons, but there are others who contend for their identity.

† The exact date of the Brut of Geoffrey of Monmouth, has not been ascertained, but as Robert, Earl of Gloucester, to whom it is dedicated, died in 1147, it must have been edited previous to that time.

‡ Dr. Giles's Preface to his edition of Geoffrey of Monmouth's "Chronicle," contains further information upon this subject.—EDITOR.

The Brut of Geoffrey of Monmouth, though once received as containing the real and authentic records of the ancient British race, has long been discarded as of any historical authority; but in proportion as its authenticity has declined, its literary value has increased; inasmuch as it has been the means of forming a new era in literature, and founding a new school in imaginative composition. For it is to the Brut of Geoffrey of Monmouth, that we are to ascribe the origin of the Arthurian cyclus of Romance, and, perhaps, much of the chivalrous spirit which pervaded the civilised world soon after its appearance; the effects of which continue to influence society even to the present day.

That the Brut was known on the continent of Europe, and exerted an influence there within a few years after its publication in Britain, is very evident; as Alanus de Insulis, a writer of the twelfth century, speaking of King Arthur, says that his fame had reached even Rome:

"Cantat gesta ejus domina civitatum Roma."

Henry of Huntingdon states that he saw the Brut on the continent, as early as the year 1139. And in the course of ten years from that time, King Arthur and the Court of Caerlleon, formed the chief subject of the French Trouvères, as also subsequently, of the Provençal Troubadours. From France, these Welsh legends travelled into Germany and Scandinavia; and in addition to the testimony of Alanus de Insulis, from the manner in which Dante introduces the name of Lancelot, it is evident that the Arthurian Romances had become popular in Italy in his time; and that they continued to be so in the fifteenth century, we may gather from Boiardo:

"Fu gloriosa Bertagna la grande—si che al Re Artuse fa portare onore."

As to the introduction of the Welsh Romantic legends into Spain, and their influence upon the literature of that country, we need only refer to Cervantes, in whose work Merlin acts so conspicuous a part. And the reviewers of Don Quixotte's library will testify to their influence in Portugal, when, on opening the Romance of Palmerin of England, one of them observes, that "it is said to have been

composed by an ingenious King of Portugal." This Palmerin is probably Paulmerion, the ancient British King, and one of the ancestors of Vortigern; whose son Glouida is said to have founded the city of Gloucester:

"Glouida filius Paulmerion, ipse autem Glouida ædificavit urbem magnam super ripam fluminis Sabrinæ, quæ vocatur Britannice sermone Cair Gloui." Gunn's Nennius.*

There exist certain indications which impress us with an idea, that these British legends have been translated even into the Arabic. But however this may be, we have indisputable proof of their having appeared in the Greek, as there is a Poem of the twelfth century, in that language, still extant, in which the heroes are the Knights of the Round Table.

From the manner in which the Welsh names are given, it appears that the subject passed into Greek through the medium of the Italian; Arthur being written *Αρτουζος*, and Gwenhwyfar is *Ντζενεβρα* the *Ντζ* being intended to represent the Italian G in Genevra, whilst *Γαουλβανος* is Galvani, the Italian form of Gwalchmai. The Poem bears every mark of being a translation: Lancelot of the Lake is *εκ λιμνης Λανσελωτος*, and the Round Table Knights are called *Τραπεζης της στρογγυλης*. The following lines will shew the metre:

Ο δε πρεσβυτης ειρηκεν χαιρε μοι Γαουλβανε,
Ο του ρηγος αδελφιδους Αρτουζου Βρετανιας
Την κλησιν επιφεροντι, Ουτερωπαντραγορου †

But at the same time that the Brut is admitted to have been the means of the first introduction of the Welsh traditions, and of their general extension amongst the Continental nations; yet we find amongst the Romances of the continent many Tales which are not contained in the Brut, most of which are still extant amongst the Welsh, especially in the collection called the Mabinogion. Some of these Tales, probably, found their way through Brittany, and others by means of the Anglo-Norman Trouvères. But by whatever

* This is the Vatican MS. published with a translation by Gunn.

† See pages 270—1.

channel they were transmitted, their universal adoption in so short a space of time, constitutes a very extraordinary mental phenomenon. Nor was this impression, made by the Welsh legends in the twelfth century, ever obliterated; but on the contrary, its existence may be traced through each successive generation to the present day. Shakspeare founded several of his Plays upon these Tales. Milton once intended making Arthur the hero of his Epic. And one of the most perfect Poems produced within our own time, "The Bridal of Triermain," proves how deeply the mind of Scott was imbued with Arthurian Romance.

In prosecuting this subject we encounter a very remarkable fact; which is, that the poets and prose writers amongst the Welsh, have respectively taken up positions, the very opposite to those of the same classes in other nations. The Bards occupying themselves with the matter of fact occurrences of the day, whilst the prose writers were employed in composing Romances: for such are the *Mabinogion*; a series of Tales which, for variety of incident, originality, and power of invention, are not to be equalled by those of any country whatever, prior to the revival of literature in modern times. Such an assertion will of course be disputed, and the *Arabian Nights*, and French Metrical Romances adduced in confutation. But it must be recollected that the *Arabian Nights*, in their present form, are not older than the sixteenth century; such ancient Arabic Tales as have been preserved, and which appear to be the rudiments of the present compositions, being greatly inferior in point of imagination and general interest. And with regard to the French Metrical Romances, they are merely the legends of the Welsh, translated and versified.

In reviewing the impressions made by the consideration of this subject, we arrive at the conclusion, that during the prescribed period of 250 years, the Welsh language did not, in its grammatical structure, undergo any perceptible change. Also, that in its idiom, and turn of expression, there is but little difference to be noticed; and that little, must be attributed to the difference of taste in the several writers, rather than to any essential alteration in the language itself. And as the number of writers increased, the variety of modes of

expression would naturally increase as well; and new compound words would be formed. During this period also, a trifling addition was made to its vocabulary, through the introduction of Norman words. Subject to these exceptions, we can scarcely discover any difference in the language used by Gwilym Ddu in the fourteenth century, and that of Meilyr in the eleventh.



AN
HISTORICAL ACCOUNT
OF THE
Statuta Walliæ, or the Statutes of Rhuddlan,
BY WHICH WALES WAS ANNEXED TO ENGLAND.
BY
Rhynyr Ynad.

At the Abergavenny Eisteddfod of October, 1848, a Prize of Five Guineas was given by Lady Parry of Madryn, for the best historical account of "*Statuta Walliæ*," or the Statutes of Rhuddlan, by which Wales was annexed to England.

The following production was described by Archdeacon Williams, as "a most able and well written Essay, which will prove most interesting to all who possess an antiquarian taste." The Prize was awarded to its Author; who wrote under the signature of "*Rhynyr Ynad*," and sealed the envelope, which contained his real name, with the impression of the Dying Gladiator. It was his last.

An Historical Account of the Statuta Wallie, or the Statutes of Rhuddlan, Which annexed Wales to England.

BEFORE discussing those laws enacted by Edward the First, for the government of his newly acquired dominions in Wales, and known as the Statutes of Rhuddlan, it will be found expedient to take a retrospective view of the progress of Welsh legislation, anterior to those enactments, and to inquire into the circumstances which called for such innovations.

According to the Welsh records, the Laws of Britain had, at a very remote period of antiquity, been formed into a code, by Prydain the son of Aedd Mawr; but the tradition is too vague to justify any historical notice further than admitting the possibility of the fact.

This code is said to have undergone a revision by Dyfnwal Moelmud, (Latinized into Dunwalo Molmutus,) about 400 years before the Christian era; of which code several clauses are alleged to be still in existence, and to be seen in the ancient Triads which bear the name of that legislator: whatever degree of reality this tradition may possess, there is no reason to doubt that a code of laws, bearing the name of Dyfnwal Moelmud, existed in the tenth century, as in the

* Although in the title prescribed for this Essay, the plural noun "Statuta" is used, and also that of "Statutes," and this is borne out by the conclusion of the enactment, in which it is spoken of as "Predicta Statuta," nevertheless it will be seen that the law passed at Rhuddlan by Edward the First, by which Wales was annexed to England, was but one single Act, and, accordingly, the writer of the following Essay has headed it as such, i. e. The Statute of Rhuddlan.

preamble to the Laws of Howel Dda, it is expressly stated, that it was this very code of Dyfnwal that was taken as the basis of the new enactments. The only objection to the possibility of the ancient British Laws having been preserved till the tenth century, is the existence of the Roman power in Britain for so many centuries, and the difficulty of believing that the native laws could have maintained their influence. But this objection will be found to possess but little weight, when we consider that it was customary with the Romans to allow the conquered nations the rights of the *Jus Latium*, or the privilege of governing themselves by their own laws, requiring of them nothing further than the payment of tribute, and general obedience to the Roman power. And, perhaps, the condition of India at the present day, in its subjection to Britain, will afford an exact representation of that of Britain under the Romans. Therefore, on the departure of the Roman troops, the people were left, with regard to legislation, very much in the same state as before their arrival. In confirmation of which it may be stated, that the Welsh Laws of Howel Dda do not bear the slightest resemblance to those of Rome; the few Latin terms which they contain being purely of ecclesiastic introduction.

Under whatever name the Welsh laws existed at the departure of the Romans, it is evident that for some time previous to the tenth century, they were called the Laws of Dyfnwal Moelmud; and it is stated that at that period they had become so corrupted, as to require a total revision; and, accordingly, in the year 914, Howel Dda convened a council of chieftains and clergy, who assembled at the *Ty Gwyn ar Daf*, (Whitland,) on the borders of Caernarthen-shire and Pembrokeshire, and entered into arrangements for the framing of a new code, taking the ancient laws of Dyfnwal as the foundation. This new code, which is called "The Laws of Howel Dda," (Cyfreithiau Hywel Dda,) continued for near two centuries as the law of Wales, without any alteration; but in consequence of the inevitable changes wrought by time in the state of society, this code called for another revision; and, accordingly, the then reigning Princes of Wales undertook such revision, but without altering either the arrangement or the title of the code, which under

the name of Howel Dda continued generally in force for two centuries longer; but not entirely so, as its influence began to be interfered with towards the end of the eleventh century, by the encroachments of the Lords Marchers, who, wherever their power extended, introduced the Norman laws; or else some legislative forms of their own enactment, having the Norman laws for their basis.

As the social state of Wales begins at this time to assume an aspect very different to that which it had previously exhibited, we must here devote a few moments to the consideration of the changes which were at this time taking place.

When William the Conqueror had gained possession of England, he changed the condition of the people almost entirely; reducing them to a state of vassalage, parcelling out the kingdom amongst his followers in Manors or Lordships, having courts of justice, in which the law was administered chiefly, if not entirely, according to the Norman practice. And these Lordships were held by charters or grants from the Conqueror, in feudal tenure; their rights and duties distinctly defined.

William the Conqueror* never obtained any possessions in Wales, nor did he ever attempt to gain any. But after his death, and during the reign of his son William Rufus, some of the Norman Lords on the borders of Wales, or the Marches, as they were called, [from mark, a limit,] began to make incursions into the adjoining Welsh territories; and, occasionally, taking possession of some lands, annexed them to their own property; and thus in a short time they became possessed of considerable portions of the country. Robert Fitzhamon won the Lordship of Glamorgan; Bernard de Newmarch that of Brecknock; Hugh Lupus, Roger Mortimer, Fitzalan, Montgomery and others, made

* Hanes Cymru, page 480, contradicts this statement.

The Anglo Saxon Chronicle says:

"A.D. 1081, this year the King (William the Conqueror) led an army into Wales, and there he set free many hundred persons."

The same Chronicle, in the year 1087, giving a summary of that King's life and actions, says:—

"The land of the Britons (Wales) was under his sway, and he built Castles therein; moreover he had full dominion over the Isle of Man (Anglesey.)"—Vide Giles's Edition, pp. 457 and 462. Bohn, 1847.

See also Hamilton's Thierry's "Norman Conquest," and the authorities there quoted, pp. 91, in proof of William the Conqueror's acquisitions in Wales.—EDITOR.

themselves masters of lands on the borders, in like manner. These chieftains were called Lords Marchers, that appellation being given from their residing on the borders of Wales; and although in the course of time their possessions extended further into the country, yet the original title of "Marcher" was applied to them in whatever part of the Principality they lay. The first of these adventurers seem to have acted upon their own responsibility in their invasions; but afterwards they did homage to the Kings of England, before setting out, for such lands as they should be able to conquer. And on this account, no Lord Marcher ever held his land in Wales by charter; for, previous to his expedition, the King could not grant a charter, not knowing what lands he might conquer, or whether he would conquer any at all: and after he had succeeded in conquering any, he would not apply to the King for a charter, as such an instrument could not add to his power; but, on the other hand, it might encumber him with some troublesome conditions.

Another difference betwixt a Lord Marcher and a Lord of an English Manor, consisted in the mode of obtaining his territory. William the Conqueror had subdued England with his own troops, and at his own charges, and had given the several Lordships to his followers as presents, according to his own discretion; but the Lords Marchers received no assistance from the King of England, either in troops or money, but made their conquests entirely with their own men, and at their own cost; therefore, they were, in their respective territories, virtually, independent sovereigns, exercising rights of *Jura regalia*, merely doing homage to the King of England, and even placed beyond the limits of the King's writs,

"Ubi brevia Regis non currunt:"

though the Kings of England had also some possessions in Wales, soon after the earliest Marcher conquests.

When these Norman Lords had secured their new possessions in Wales, they began to establish Courts of Justice for their government; and wherever it was practicable, they introduced the Norman form of Judicature: a system totally different to that of the Welsh, who had hitherto retained the code of Howel Dda. The difference between these two

systems is observable in almost every particular, especially in the transfer of land : according to the Welsh practice it was made by the form called *Côf Llys*, and *Estyn Wialen* ; whereas by the Norman Law it was made by *Fine*, *Recovery*, *Feoffment*, *Livery of Seizin*, and *Attornment*.

But although the Lords Marchers had managed to obtain possession of such considerable territories in Wales, yet the people were by no means willing to submit to these foreign laws and usages, and claimed to be governed by those of their own country ; and, in numerous instances, it was found necessary to comply with their demands ; and, accordingly, we find in many manorial districts an English Court and a Welsh Court ; which to this day are distinguished as such, by the terms *Anglicana* and *Wallicana* or *Wallensis*, and sometimes *Englischerie* and *Welsherie* ; as in the instances of *Coity Anglicana*, and *Coity Walliæ* ; and of *Avon Anglicana*, and *Avon Wallicana*, in Glamorgan ; *Haia Anglicana*, and *Haia Wallicana*, the later still called the *Welsh Hay*, in Breconshire. Also, in the same county, *English Pencelly*, and *Welsh Pencelly* ; *English Talgarth*, and *Welsh Talgarth*. Also, *Cidwely Anglicana*, and *Cidwely Wallicana*, in Carmarthenshire, &c.

In the districts subject to the jurisdiction of these courts, the English or Welsh systems prevailed, according to the usages implied by their respective designations, and sometimes a mixed system was in use, called, *cyfraith Saesonaeg a rhan Gymraeg*, that is, English law with part Welsh ; for although the law was Norman throughout the whole of England, yet soon after the Conquest every thing connected with that kingdom was called English, and hence the above appellations of *Anglicana*, *Saesonaeg*, *Englischerie*, &c.

Such is the state in which the administration of the law in Wales existed at the commencement of the reign of Edward the First, when an event occurred which enabled that monarch greatly to forward the progress of the English system in the country. Eleanor, daughter of Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, had been for some time betrothed to Llewelyn ap Gruffydd, Prince of Wales, and was residing in the Convent of Montargis, in France. About this time, 1276, Llewelyn sent a request to the King of France, that

Eleanor might be brought over to Wales, in order to solemnize the marriage. This request was complied with, and Eleanor was sent off by her mother, in charge of her brother Amaury, but the ship in which they were was captured by some English vessel, and carried into Bristol, and Eleanor given up to Edward, by whom she was detained prisoner; and before the Prince could obtain her liberation, he was compelled to sign certain articles, in which he consented to do homage to Edward for, and cede over to him, the district comprising the four Cantreds, of Rhos, Rhyfoniog, Tegengel, and Dyffryn Llwyd.

When Edward had thus obtained possession of the four Cantreds, he began to introduce the English laws, contrary to the provisions of the treaty; which arbitrary and unjust proceeding caused great dissatisfaction, so that in the year 1280, Edward issued a commission to Thomas, Bishop of St. David's, Reginald de Gray, and Walter de Hopton; appointing them to examine, upon oath, unsuspected persons, both Welsh and English, in order to obtain information respecting the laws and usages, by which the Kings, his (Edward's) predecessors, had been accustomed to govern and order the Prince of Wales, and the Welsh Barons of Wales, and their Peers, and others their equals; and all particulars connected with such laws and usages. And these Commissioners were commanded to appoint certain days and places for carrying on this inquiry, and to return and account to the King within three weeks from Easter. An order was also issued to all Justices, Sheriffs, Bailiffs, and other Officers of the King in Wales, requiring them to cause to appear on the days appointed, all such witnesses as might be able to give information on the subject; and also requiring that they should attend upon, and render every assistance and advice to the said commissioners, in order that every needful information might be obtained. This commission was dated at Westminster, the fourth day of December, in the ninth year of the reign of King Edward.

This inquiry comprised fourteen interrogations, which were as follows:

1. The witness was to be asked, whether he ever saw a lawsuit between the Prince of Wales, and the Welsh Barons of Wales.

2. Between what Prince, and what Barons or Baron, and before what Judges.

3. Whether he saw any lawsuit between a Welsh Baron of Wales, and his Peer.

4. Between what Baron and what Peer or Peers, and before what Judges.

5. If he saw a lawsuit between a person of inferior rank, and his equal or equals.

6. Between what person of inferior rank, and his equal or equals.

7. If he saw a lawsuit ; according to what laws or usages was it conducted.

8. Before what Justices or Judges ; and in whose Court ; and where was it conducted.

9. If the proceedings were to be by Royal writ, before the Judges, by objection and responding, and then by inquisition.

10. If it was to be adjudged according to their word and assertion respecting the inquisition ; or in some other manner.

11. If it was to be adjudged according to the law of Howel Dda, called Kyfraith ; and how often did he see it thus adjudged, and before whom, and where.

12. In what cases was it customary to adjudge according to that law, and whether in-moveables, or im-moveables ; or in both.

13. If it was not possible to form a judgment from the confession of the parties ; must they proceed by inquisition, or by assize, and thus having ascertained the truth, to adjudge.

14. Whether was it solely in matters of antiquity, to which memory did not extend, or in all matters, new as well as old, that judgment ought to be given, according to the aforesaid law of Howel Dda.

Armed with these powers, the Commissioners proceeded to Chester, and commenced their labours forthwith :

1. "William Lantelyn, Knight, being sworn and diligently examined, concerning all and each of the fore-named articles, says, that he knows nothing.

2. The Lord Urian de St. Piere, Knight, being sworn and diligently examined, says, that he saw a lawsuit between Roger, the Seneschal of Mold and Griffith ap Madoc, Lord of Maelor ; before the justices of the lord the King, viz. ;—William de Wilton, Geoffrey de Langel, and John the son of Geoffrey, by the King's writ, which was adjudicated at Rhuddlan, by twelve Jurors, from the four Cantreds ; of which there were three Jurors from each Cantred, and by their verdict sentence was given. Of other suits he has no recollection.

3. Hamund de Culford, being sworn and examined, says, the same as Lord Urian, last sworn, and agrees with him in all things. The same Hamund being questioned concerning the Law of Wales, says, that the common law in Wales is, that when any one claims land of

another, the complaint being heard, the Lord of the Feod ought to seize the land in dispute ; and then he who claims the land shall give to the lord, out of his own property, whatever may be agreed upon between them ; and the lord shall grant to him twelve Jurors, and according to their verdict it shall be adjudicated. Being asked whether it was by Pledges, or by the Law of Howel Dda, he saw it adjudicated, he answers, that he has not seen. Being asked whether it was usual to proceed by the King's writ, or without a writ ; he says, it is always customary to proceed by writ, concerning lands and possessions, in the same manner as proceedings are at this time conducted before the King's Justices now being. Being asked if he has seen any other suit between any other parties, he says, "yes." For that he has seen the Lord Ralph of Mold, then living, claiming the land of the late David of Mold, his brother, and that he obtained it by the verdict of twelve Jurors, in the fore mentioned form, and still holds it. He also says, that Llewelyn, the son of Gruffydd, then living, came before the King's Justices at Gruffydd's Cross, but the suit was not terminated, on account of war occurring. He adds, moreover, that the King's Seneschal of Mold, claimed the land of Mold, of David ab Llewelyn, before the Lord J. Le Estraunge and others, Justices of the King at Wapir, and there argued his right, by the descent of his ancestors, by common writ and the general law, then practised by the King's Justices in parts of Wales. Being questioned concerning the particulars of other suits ; he says, that he has seen many other suits thus terminated, but he does not now recollect the whole of them.

4. Hugh de Polford, says, he knows nothing, as he never had any intercourse with the Welsh, or heard them pleading, either before the Justice or others.

5. Lord Roger de Humvill, says that as far as he has hitherto understood, the common law betwixt the Prince of Wales and the Welsh Barons of Wales, and betwixt the Welsh Barons of Wales and their equals and inferiors, was that when any person claimed land, he gave to the lord what he could agree upon with the lord, or his Bailiff, and he should have a Jury of twelve Jurors ; nor did he ever see an adjudication by any law of Howel Dda. He says likewise, that it was always customary to proceed by the King's writ, as at that present time, before the King's Justices. He also says that the person claiming land shall give of his possession to the lord of the land, and shall have an Inquisition of twelve Jurors ; and it was thus that the Lord Ralph, of Mold, sued for the land of David of Mold, his brother. Being asked whether the lord ought to take possession of the land at the commencement of the suit ; he says, that he did not know. Being asked whether he has seen any suit terminated in the fore-mentioned form, he answers 'yes' ; and says, that he himself had a lawsuit with Cynwric Sais, and his brothers ; and that he judicially obtained his land before Roger Croistil, then Seneschal of Mold ; and he says, that it was always customary to proceed thus in those parts, and not in any other manner : nor did he ever hear of any other law or custom being practised in those parts. He adds that if any of the Jurors should be found enemies, or otherwise with good cause suspected, they might be removed from the jury or inquisition. Being questioned concerning other suits, he says, that he does not at the present time recollect.

6. William of Hawarden,—says, that he saw a lawsuit between the then Prince of Wales Llewelyn, and Owen his brother, by the writ of

King Henry, the father of the present King Edward, before the aforesaid King Henry, and his council in London, and that Owen came in his own person, nor was any thing alleged respecting the Law of Howel Dda. But that afterwards that suit was stopped by war. Being questioned respecting other suits, he says that he has seen a suit between Gruffydd and David, his brother, the Prince of Wales, before Stephen de Segrave, the King's Justice, nor did they litigate according to the Welsh Law, but by Wager of Battle after the English manner; and David's Champion was Geoffrey de Langton; and Richard de Hanetot spoke for the one, and R. de Boyland, for the other; but the suit proceeded no further as the cause was delayed by the war breaking out. Being asked if he saw many lawsuits, he says, yes, and that he himself had sued in a cause between Llewelyn, the present Prince of Wales, and Robert, the Seneschal of Mold, at Rhydema, before the Bishop of Exeter, and Walter, the Bishop of Worcester, and Adam de Gremvill. He said the proceedings were according to the Common Law, nor was any thing taken from the Welsh Law. He also says that he saw the same parties litigating at Hawarden, before the Bishop of Bath, Lord Robert Burnel, now living, and Robert Walran, but because of the forementioned war, the cause was not concluded. Being asked what the law ought to be in those parts, and what Laws or customs are in practice, he says the same as the forenamed Hamund. But he adds that whenever they practise in any other manner, it is through corruption by money or favour. Being asked if he saw any other actions at law, he says that he saw an action between Lord Thomas Corbet, and Gruffydd the son of Gwenwynwyn, concerning the land of Coedeber, at Rhydwinma, and the said Thomas did claim that land legally by Assize. Being asked if he saw many suits in those parts, he says that he saw a suit betwixt Gronw ap Bleddyn and Llywelyn Goch, and his brothers; and the said Gronow promised the Seneschal money, in order to obtain an Assize; and because he did not pay the money, the land remained in the hands of the lord. And this he saw in many other suits, which at present he does not recollect. He also says that this law is common throughout Wales between superiors and superiors; superiors and inferiors; inferiors and superiors; and equals and equals.

7. Lord Patrick de Hasewell being called and examined, respecting all these articles, says he knows nothing as he never heard any Welsh persons conducting litigations, and has but rarely had any intercourse with them.

8. Howell de Sothlat, being sworn and carefully examined, says he saw a lawsuit between Gruffyth and David his brother, Prince of Wales. The challenge was made by Gruffyth, and Ednyved responded for David, and an appeal being made, Gruffyth was imprisoned, and died in prison during the suit. He also agrees concerning the common Law of Wales with William and Hamund, the foregoing witnesses. But he adds that those by whom the Inquisition is made, when they speak their verdict are jurors without an oath.

9. John de Wetenale, being sworn, says that he saw a suit between Gruffyth and David, his brother, and agrees in this with the fore named Howel Choglathe. He also says that most frequently they adjudicate between persons in Wales by Inquisition, but how often he knows not. He says also that the lord of the place takes seizure of the disputed land into his own hand pending the suit, and afterward by giving their property they may have an Inquisition. He adds that if

any thing is laid on the disputed tenement in the name of the lord of the foresaid tenement, that the Tenant cannot work upon it, as long as it is litigated. Concerning the Common Law, he agrees with the foregoing Witnesses.

10. Hugh de Hatton—has nothing to say.

11. John de Marston—nothing.

12. William de Bonebur, says respecting a challenge being made, that he saw and was present at Chester, before the King when a challenge was made by the uncle of forenamed witness W. to wit, the Lord William de Maupas. In the other matters he agrees with the forenamed witnesses Howel Soglaethe, William, and Hamund.

13. Robert le Brun, says he has not been present amongst the Welsh, in their courts, but he heard that causes concerning rights of parties are discussed by Inquisition. He also saw that the men of Kinerton sued Gruffyth the son of Madoc, Lord of Bromfield for a tenement there, and that at last the said suit was concluded in the Prince's Court, by Inquisition. And so he says of every suit.

14. Geoffrey of Oddon—knows nothing.

15. Richard de Massy—knows nothing.

16. The Lord Abbot of Chester being sworn, says he knows nothing of the articles in question. Being asked if he has in his possession any writings by which the Lord the King might obtain any information respecting the aforesaid articles, he says that he has not.

17. Allan de Calveton, a monk—knows nothing.

18. Master John de Stanleze, Clerk—says the same as William de Hawarden of the Inquisitions between Ralph, Lord of Mold, and David his brother, but of others he knows nothing.

19. Roger Trocle—says the same as Roger de Humvill, concerning the suit between the said Roger and the son of Kynwric Sais. He says also that Cadwgan Ddu by the Common Law in the King's Court, and by Writ, recovered against Gruffyth Ddu and his brothers in the Liberty of Mold. He says also that William de Hawarden recovered by the King's Writ in the foresaid Liberty against the Lord, and by giving of his property obtained an Inquisition. He also says that David ab Gruffyth ab Owen, Lord of Edeirnion, a Welsh Baron, came before the King now at Marliffeud and claimed the village of Bryntot, which is within the Liberty of Mold, against Maurice de Cronn, then tenant; and the Bailiff of the said Maurice came and claimed it in the Lord's Court, and obtained it. Then the said David coming into the same Court, recovered it there by Inquisition by paying ten Marks. and thus by Inquisition and by giving of one's property is the custom hitherto, as well in the time of the Princes as of other Lords."

Here the examination at Chester terminates.

Having thus finished their task at Chester, the Commissioners proceeded to Rhuddlan, in the Cantred of Tegengel, and there they examined persons out of that Cantred respecting

the articles. But previous to their commencing the examinations, Llewelyn ap Gruffyth, Prince of Wales, sent in the following request.

“Inasmuch as it has pleased our Lord the King, to send such venerable and noble persons as you are, to inquire into the truth concerning the laws and customs of the parts of Arwystly between the Dyvi and Dulais, in Wales, in use in the times of their illustrious predecessors, the Kings of England; therefore the Lord Llewelyn, Prince of Wales, requests that you will be pleased to inquire carefully whether there are Welsh Judges in the aforesaid parts, there holding the office of judging the aforesaid lands, and their inhabitants according to the Welsh laws. For if those lands were not judged by the aforesaid laws, it would not be necessary to have these Judges sworn and examined for the purpose of giving judgment. For it is clearer than the light, that the sons of Rhynyr ap Cadwgan, are officially Judges, that is in Welsh Yneid, in Arwystly; and that Iorwerth Vychan is Judge, that is Ynad, in Keveiliawc, and betwixt the Dyvi and Dulais.”

The Commissioners then proceeded with their examinations.

1. Penewret Sais, being sworn, says that he heard his father relate, that there had been a lawsuit between Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, Prince of Wales, holding, and Gwenwynwyn claiming the whole land of Powys, before the Justices of the Lord the King at Westminster; in the time of what King, and before what Judges he does not know. When the Prince of Wales gave answer in the King's Court in this manner, to wit,—that the same Gwenwynwyn was convicted of being a deceiver of that Prince, for which by the judgment of the same Court he lost the land of Powys, and thence was disinherited and so died. Being asked how Gruffyth Gwenwynwyn's son recovered the said land of Powys; he says it was by the power of King Henry, in time of war. He says also that Einion ap Gwalchmai was associated with the King's Justices at Westminster, and they adjudicated together. He also says that he saw a lawsuit at Rhuddlan, between Roderic, Plaintiff, and Prince Llewelyn, Defendant, concerning his share of a joint property in Wales, and he there responded according to the common law, and shewed a certain writing made between them. He also says that according to the law of Howel Dda, no one can sell his inheritance or give a quit-claim of it. Being asked concerning the custom of the common law, he says that when there is a suit between any respecting any land, the lord of the place shall lay a Defence upon that tenement, and it is at the will of that lord to grant the parties; the law which is called Kyfraith, or that in which the truth of the matter is inquired into by the country. He also says that he has heard his father relate that there was a suit betwixt Gruffyth ap Llewelyn and David his brother, in the King's Court, whence proceeded a Duel by champions, as is mentioned elsewhere. He says also that the Prince and any lord of Wales can correct and amend the laws. He says also that he has often seen that the trial has been by jury amongst inferiors, but he does not know how often.

“Quod rei veritas inquisita fuit per patriam.” *

* For an explanation of this expression, see a subsequent passage.

David ap Richard—says the same with Kynwric, the foregoing witness, concerning the lawsuit between Llewelyn ap Iorwerth and Gwenwynwyn about the land of Powys. He also says the same concerning the common law, that whensoever a suit took place between any persons, it was in the power of the lord to grant to the parties either the law, called Kyfraith, or that the matter should be tried by jury, as above stated ; and thus he saw many suits terminated. He says also that the Prince or other, Lord of Wales, could correct and amend the laws, &c.

Einion ap Rhyryd—says the same respecting the common law with the fore-examined. He adds also that in cases of recent seizing, it was usual to proceed by the English law, [*rei veritas inquiri*] and in cases of old possession, by the [Welsh] law called Kyfraith. He also says that should there be a lawsuit between a rich man and a poor man, respecting any tenement, that it was at the option of the lord, whether they should use the aforesaid [Welsh] law, or the English method, [*rei veritas*] so that equality be observed, and thus he saw many suits terminated. Concerning the suit between Gruffyth and his brother David, he agrees with the fore-going witnesses.

Einon ap Ivor—says the same, and also that in case of a lawsuit between the nobles of Wales, they were accustomed to sue in the King's Court.

Ivor ap Tegwared, a Welsh Ynad, in Latin *Judex*, [a Judge]—says that the nobles of Wales have been accustomed to obtain judgment before the King and his Justices. Concerning the laws, he agrees with the fore-examined. He adds also, that where the truth of the matter could not be easily inquired into by the law Kyfraith, it was customary to obtain an *Imparlance* ; for as in Wales it was not customary to proceed by Wager of Battle, the law Kyfraith, used in lieu of the Duel to terminate the suit, &c. and thus was it always usual to do.

Einion ap David, a Judge—says the same with Ivor the Judge, fore-examined. He says also that the Prince, if he sees the laws deficient, can amplify it ; and if it be too ample, he can abbreviate it.

Llewelyn ap Bleddyn—says that it was always customary for the nobles of Wales to conduct lawsuits before the King and his Justices, because he is their superior, and that it is in the choice of the lord, which law to grant to the parties, as afore-said. The Prince also may construct the laws, for the alleviation and not the exasperation of the Country.

Gwyon ap Madoc—says it is in the choice of the lord whether the litigating parties use the law of Kyfraith, or the practice of *Rei veritas*. He says also that he has heard that Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, formerly Prince of Wales, would not by any means, in his time, permit the practice of the said law of Kyfraith, but that the truth of the matter should be inquired into, [*sed quod rei veritas inquireretur*], and thus does the present Prince Llewelyn, according to the usual mode. Of suits amongst others he knows nothing.

Ednyvet ap Ithel—agrees with the fore-going, that the lawsuits of the Nobility have always been accustomed to be determined before the King and his Justices. But he says that contrary to the will of the Plaintiff or Defendant, the King cannot proceed by the new

method, [*veritatem inquirere per patriam*] but always by the law of Kyfraith; unless it shall be otherwise arranged by consent of the parties, and this, whether it be a rich or a poor person.

Rhyryd ap Llowarch—agrees in every thing with the fore-going witnesses.

Blethyn ap Ithel—says that when a lawsuit occurred between the Nobility of Wales, the cause was conducted before the King and his Justices, as he believes and understands. Concerning the other articles he knows nothing, as he says he attends more to hunting than discussing the law.

Ithel ap Howel—says that the King as superior and his Justices ought to adjudicate between the Nobles of Wales. But he says that he never saw any lawsuit of the kind. He says also that he has often seen the Bailiff agree, according to his own will, to the Inquisition by the new law [*rei veritas*]. And he says that the Prince, to wit, the King, can amend the laws for alleviation and not for causing grievance.

Llewelyn ap Meylir—says that he saw in the town of Rhuddlan, that Llewelyn, the present Prince, adjudging between a Nobleman and a poor man, litigating before the Prince, conducted the inquiry according to the new mode, [*rei veritas*] but he does not know the names of the litigants, but he never saw a lawsuit in this manner between equals. Concerning the amending of laws, he agrees with the preceeding.

Iorwerth ap Madoc—says that the King as superior ought always, to adjudicate between the Nobility of Wales and their Peers. He also says that he, the Bailiff, agreed to try the cause by the mode of *Rei veritas*, and if the cause could not be decided thus, then it must be determined by the law of Kyfraith.

Llowarch ap Meyric—agrees with the fore-going.

Gruffyth ap Rhyryd—agrees with the three last witnesses.

Iorwerth ap Rhyryd—agrees with the last, and with others, in all things.

Gronw ap Davydd Vychan—agrees in this with the other witnesses that the King as superior, ought always to adjudicate between his subjects. He does not, however, recollect that he saw any lawsuit between any persons, but proceedings ought and have been accustomed to be conducted by the usage of *Rei veritas* notwithstanding the objection of the defendant.

Gwyon ap Blethyn—agrees in all things with the foregoing Gronw.

The Lord Gruffyth de Brug, [Bridgenorth] a monk of Basingwerk, says he has not seen any lawsuit between any persons, nor does he know any thing of their laws and usages.

Baldwin, a monk of the same place—says the same with the foregoing. Being asked whether he had in his possession any instruments by which the King might obtain any information on the subject of the articles, he says no.

Rhyryd ap Iorwerth—says that he saw a suit between Llewelyn the present Prince, and Gruffyth the son of Gwenwynwyn before the King at Rhuddlan. And he afterwards saw a suit between them before W. de Hopton and his associates at Montgomery. And he firmly believes

that the King and his Justices ought to decide lawsuits between the nobility of Wales, as their superior. He also says that suits are more frequently conducted according to *Rei veritatem*, than according to the Law of Kyfraith; and this according to the will of the Lord or the Bailiffs, notwithstanding the objection of the Defendant. It nevertheless.....[apparently an omission here,] and the Prince can amend the laws. He says also that the whole country prefers to proceed according [*Rei Veritatem*,] rather than according to the Law of Kyfraith.

Tuder ap David—says the same as Rhyryd.

Addun ap Tuder—says the same.

Tuder ap Madoc—says the same of the suits between the Prince and Gruffydd according to hearsay of the suit between Gruffyth ap Iorwerth, and David his brother before the King in London. He says also, respecting the law, the same as Rhyryd the forenamed.

Davydd ap Einion—says that he has heard of the suit formerly between Gruffyth and his brother David in London, before the King, and of the Wager of Battle. Of the laws he says the custom is to proceed by *Rei veritas*, at the option of the lord, unless it should happen that on account of the length of time, they cannot proceed by this method, in which case recourse is had to the forenamed Law [of Kyfraith.]

Meuric ap Tuder—says that he has no recollection of lawsuits, but he verily believes that the King and his Justices ought to have cognizance. Concerning the laws and customs, he agrees with the preceding witnesses.

Heilin ap Blethyn—says that he has seen a suit between the present Prince and Gruffyth ab Wenwynwyn, before the King and his Justices. Of other suits he has no recollection. Of the laws he says the same as the other witnesses, and of their alteration for mitigation and not exasperation.

Kynwric ap Kareweth, [query Iorwerth?—]says the same with the foregoing in every thing. He says also that with the laws themselves, people at present declare themselves well satisfied, because their Bailiff, to wit, Gronw ab Heylin, conducts himself well amongst them, always inviting to an inquiry by *Rei Veritatem*, and this mode the community desires, &c.

Einion ab Ithel [query Ieuan?—]says that he has seen the Nobility of Wales trying causes before the King, and before W. de Hopton, and he says there is no doubt that lawsuits ought to be tried before the King and his justices, as before the lord. Concerning the Laws, he says the same as the preceding witness Kynwric.

Kynwric ab Elidir—says the same as Einion. He adds moreover that where the truth of the matter [*Rei Veritas*] cannot be elicited, then the proceeding must be according to the forementioned Law, and according to that Law, they must go upon the tenement claimed; nevertheless the Lord or his Bailiff can say to the parties in Court, if he pleases, "You shall have the same justice here as if you were upon the tenement in question;" and thus they ought to be in Court according to the will of the Lords, or the Bailiffs. In the other articles he agrees with the foregoing.

Heylin ab Roppert—agrees with the preceding in all things, except that where the proceedings are according to the Law of Kyfraith

they must always go to the tenement in dispute and not elsewhere in any Court.

Ithel ap Philip—says the same in all things with the fore-named Kywric; adding that the Prince can at his own will convert the laws and alter them for the better; exemplifying David ap Llewelyn the Grandfather of the present Prince, who by himself and his council annulled the law of Glanas [Homicide,] throughout all North Wales. It appeared to him and his council that the perpetrators of a crime ought to be detained, and not others who had done nothing wrong, which was otherwise done in the case of Glanas.

Gronw ab Philip—agrees with the two preceding.

Ednyvet ap Einion—says the same with Helyn ap Roppert.

Einion ap Ioynaf, (Ieuav?)—says that he knows nothing of lawsuits; but he says that certainly the Barons of Wales, litigate before the King as well as before the lord; and that the mode of *Rei veritate*, should be used rather than the proceeding by the law of Kyfraith, because it is more pleasing to God, according to what he says.

Einion ap Richard—says that he knows nothing of lawsuits, but he says that the whole country prefers the proceedings by *Rei veritate*, than by the law of Kyfraith; and thus it most frequently occurs among them.

Gruffyth ab Tudor—says that when Llewelyn the Prince was not in allegiance to the King, then the Barons subject to him in Wales were accustomed to litigate before the Prince himself. But since that Llewelyn was in allegiance to the King, then the proceedings were before the King and his Justices. Of the laws and customs, he says it is of the option of the lords to grant either the law of Kyfraith, or the proceedings of *Rei veritas*. Of amending the laws, he says that the King can amend them at the urgent desire of the country and with the consent of his council. Of other matters he knows nothing.

Gruffyth ab Iorwerth, a Judge—says that it is at the option of the lords to grant to parties either the law of Kyfraith or that of *Rei veritas*. And he says the country prefers the proceeding by *Rei veritas*, if it could be conducted by trustworthy men. In other things he agrees with the preceding. He also adds that if the law of Kyfraith is granted to parties, in that case the Judge ought to go to the tenement.

Tuder Vychan—says that the superior ought always to have cognizance amongst his subjects. Of the rest he says the same as others.

Kynwric ab Madoc—says the same, and adds that the lord can never appoint the mode of *Rei veritas* against the will of the possessor, but must proceed by the law of Kyfraith, especially in suits concerning land.

Elias de Llewenny—says the same with Gruffyth ab Iorwerth. He also says that if he himself were King, all should proceed by *Rei veritas*.

Tegwared, the Son of John, one of the Judges of the Town of Rhuddlan,—says that he has often seen judgement according to the following mode, to wit,—when any one would claim land of another,

he ought first of all to give sureties for proceeding. And so ought the defendant to find sureties that he will be before the Judges at a certain day and place in order to answer; and if either of them should desire the law of Howel Dda, and the other should desire the inquiry by *Rei veritas*, the Prince may grant to the opposing party, for money, of his special favour if he wills it the inquiry by *Rei veritas*. Being asked if he ever heard that Llewelyn proceeded by the law of Howel Dda, when any one desired the inquisition by *Rei veritas*; he says that neither he nor Llewelyn his Grandfather, nor David his Uncle, ever would judge according to that law, but according to the inquisition. And he assigns the reason, that the Welsh have a proverb in their native language*—"Stronger is the truth [*Rei veritas*] than the law," [*Plus valet Veritas quam Lex.*] And he says that he saw a suit terminating in the fore-going manner before the present Prince and his Judges, between the sons of William ab Robin, and the daughters of John his Uncle; and between David ab Tegwared, and his Relative; and between Gwyl ab Ridi and William ab Owen, who gave six pounds to the Prince for having an Inquisition. And in the fore-going form he has frequently seen adjudications before the Prince's Bailiffs, but how often he does not know.

Einion ab Nest, one of the Judges of the town of Rhuddlan—being asked concerning the laws and customs of the town, says that it is in the will of the lord to grant for money or favour, either the inquisition or law, [*Kyfraith*.] and concerning the fore-named trials he agrees with Tegwared. He also says that it is by that method he has always seen adjudications in the court of Rhuddlan.

Cynddelw son of Gwrgenen, one of the Judges of the town of Rhuddlan—agrees in all things with Einion, adding that by the charter and grant of the present King, the Burgesses of Rhuddlan ought to have the same laws that the Burgesses of Hereford have.

Roger, son of William, a Burgess of Rhuddlan, being examined respecting the laws and customs of the fore-said town—says that they have the same laws and customs with the Burgesses of Hereford. And being asked if he recollects the fore-said lawsuits, says that he heard his father relate that the fore-said lawsuits were terminated between the fore-said persons in the fore-said form; but he himself did not see it, being then a boy or very young, as he says.

John de Pellham, a Burgess of Rhuddlan, being asked concerning the laws and customs of the town of Rhuddlan—said that he has heard

* The writer is at a loss for this Welsh proverb, but supposes it must be "*Trech gwlad nag Arglwydd*," the meaning of which, as connected with this subject, would be, "Stronger is the trial by jury, than the decision by the lord of the court;" as the word *Gwlad* answers to "*Patria*," a word continually used in this statute to designate a jury, and *Arglwydd* is the Dominus, or manorial lord, who is also frequently referred to.

It must be remarked that in this statute, "*Veritas*," and "*Rei Veritas*," are always placed in opposition to *Lex* and *Cyfraith*. The latter words always denoting the Welsh Law of Howel Dda, and the former, i. e. *Veritas*, always implying the new system according to the English form. It is also evident that *Veritas* especially refers to the trial by jury; and although the word appears of recent introduction, yet as the practice was long established among the Welsh, it must have been known by a Welsh appellation; and if the above conjecture is right, the Welsh word for the jury must have been "*Gwlad*."

from the relation of the Burgesses of Rhuddlan, that the present King has granted to them the same liberties that the Burgesses of Hereford possess. And he says that the same laws and customs are in use at Rhuddlan as at Hereford, as he believes. And he says that he rarely comes to the court of Rhuddlan because he is a Merchant, and has but lately come to the town of Rhuddlan; and he is a great deal out of the town for the purpose of trading, therefore he does not know these laws and customs, nor can he answer further on the other subjects.

William Wirnyn—says that as often as he has seen litigation, the judgment has been given according to Inquisition. He also says that he has not often seen adjudication, as he has but lately come to Wales, and has resided but a short time in Rhuddlan. Respecting the other articles he is totally ignorant, as he says because he is a new comer.

Alan Colle, a Burgess of Rhuddlan—says the same as John de Pelham, afore-said, nor does he know any thing more.

Further evidence at Rhuddlan.

William Arbalaster, a Burgess of Rhuddlan—says the same as William Wirnyn, afore-said, nor does he know of any thing more, except that he has heard by the relation of many, that the same laws and customs are now in use in Rhuddlan as in Hereford.

Meylir, the Cemente, a Burgess of Rhuddlan—says the same, &c.

William de Coventre, a Burgess of Rhuddlan—says the same, &c.

The Commissioners having finished their examinations at Rhuddlan, proceeded to the White Monastery, [Album Monasterium,] probably in the neighbourhood of Oswestry; and commenced their examinations.

William, a clerk, being sworn and examined, says that he William recovered in the court of the White Monastery, by judgment of the same court, free from damages, a certain land, according to common law; and thus do they proceed, according to common law in all lawsuits. He has also seen a suit between Richard Prufford, and his brother, conducted according to the same law. And he has seen very many other suits which he does not remember. He says also that the King and Prince may correct the laws.

Richard the Forester—says he knows nothing of lawsuits or of the other matters.

Philip the son of Hamond—says the same with the fore-named William.

Richard the Stranger—says that when a suit is instituted between any persons, sureties are found by the parties, and it is determined by twelve jurors according to the *Rei Veritas*; and sometimes by the whole court if it is a suit of magnitude.

Einion Ddû—knows nothing.

William le Engleis—has heard that there was a lawsuit between Prince Llewelyn and Gruffyth son of Wenwynwyn, but he knows

nothing of the mode of proceeding. He understands however, that when there is a lawsuit, it shall be determined by verdict of twelve jurors according to *Rei Veritas*. Of the rest, he knows nothing.

Roger the son of John—says the same with Richard the Stranger.

John Marshal—agrees in every thing William le Engleis.

John son of Richard—says that it is by the verdict of twelve jurors, lawsuits are terminated between parties every where in his country.

Ralph son of Mabil—has seen no lawsuits that he remembers, but he says that all lawsuits concerning lands and tenements are terminated by Inquisition, according to *Rei Veritas*, as well between the Welsh as the English.

Nicholas Bonel, Vicar of the church of the White Monastery—agrees in all things with the afore-said Ralph.

Richard de Camera, Constable—says the same with Richard Strange.

Einion ab Madoc—says that when a suit is instituted amongst them concerning lands, it is determined by the verdict of twenty four jurors, in the form of Inquisition, according to *Rei Veritas*. He also says that any Prince may amend the laws. Also that sometimes a suit is decided by the whole court, in Inquisition.

Madoc, a Foot Soldier—says the same as the fore-going Einion.

Gruffyth Vychan—says that litigations are conducted by the whole court, by Inquisition.

Gronw Voel—says the same.

Einion Voel—says the same—and adds that the Prince may amend the laws and not deteriorate them.

Rhyrid Voel—agrees with the fore-going.

Henry Brun—recollects the suit between David ap Llewelyn and his brother Gruffyth, before the King—knows nothing more. And agrees respecting the laws, with the fore-going.

Blethyn Voel—says the same.

Blethyn ab Einion—remembers nothing of lawsuits but says that the law is decided by the whole court.

Kynwric ab Meylir—says the same.

Eynion Voel—knows nothing of lawsuits. In other things agrees with the rest.

Gruffyth Ddu—says the same.

Einion ab Ithel—says that when a suit is moved between any persons, they themselves excepted, it is decided by the whole court.

Einion Voel of Middleton—agrees with the others.

Iorwerth Vychan—agrees with the rest—also in the amending of the law.

Osbert Vychan, Bailiff of the Welsherie,—says that *Rei Veritas* by Inquisition, and by the whole court, ought to be practised. He remembers nothing of lawsuits, nevertheless he has seen a suit determined between Kynwrigyn and the son of Iorwerth ab Gruffyth, and

likewise between Rhyryd ab Howel, and the men of Llanvordav, by Inquisition; and also between many others, of which he has no recollection.

Eynion ab Ioynau—says the same.

Samuel Voel—the same.

Madoc ab Gronw—says the same with Osbert Vychan.

Cadwgan Gam—says he saw a lawsuit between Alic. Salcere, and some other person whose name he does not know, decided by a verdict of jurors and by Inquisition.

Einion ab Wichin—agrees with the fore-going.

Einion ab Ithel—says the same.

Einion Du—says they have among them a special law, that suits are determined by the whole court after the mode of Inquisition. Of the rest he does not remember.

Meredith ab Einion—agrees with the fore-going.

The Commissioners then proceeded to Montgomery.

William Gutele—says he has not seen lawsuit between any, and being asked concerning the laws, he says that amongst the Welsh, whether they litigate according to the law of Howel Dda, or the other manner, as he has heard, they always proceed by Venue by Inquisition. Of the rest he knows nothing.

William Pagyn—says that in suits about lands, they always decide by a verdict of twelve Jurors, or of the whole court. Of other matters he knows nothing, being a merchant he does not attend such matters.

William son of Robert—says the same.

Nicholas Brusebon—says he has seen a suit between Owen son of Howel, and Cadwalader and Mapmoel and his brothers, before the lord John Estrange, then Justice, which suit was decided by a verdict of twelve Jurors in the manner of Inquisition, in the court of Montgomery. And so are the proceedings carried on in the Welsh court, where they practise after the mode of Inquisition by Rei Veritas. He also says that he has seen very many instances which he does not remember.

Roger, Priest of Shirburg—says that he saw a lawsuit between Gruffyth the son of Gwenwynwyn, and Thomas Corbet of Gordur, which was decided by a verdict of twenty-four Knights. And the said tenement is in the Welsherie, and out of the County. He also says that amongst the Welsh, proceedings are conducted in the same way by Inquisition.

William de Linley—says he heard that there was a lawsuit between Gruffyth the son of Gwenwynwyn and Gruffyth the son of Madoc, concerning the land of Mohnant [Mold?] at Westminster, and it was decided by Inquisition. Respecting the laws, he says that as well in the courts of the Welsh, as in the courts of the English, they always proceed by the mode of Inquisition. Of the rest he knows nothing.

John de Caretona—says that he has heard from his predecessor that a lawsuit had been decided before the King and his Justices by

the form of Inquisition, between the Barons of the Marches and the Welsh, one half of the Jurors being from the confines of the Marches and one half Welsh; especially as the King had both under his power.

Robert son of Howel—says there was a lawsuit between lord Thomas Corbert and Gruffyth son of Gwenwynwyn, before the King's Justices concerning the land of Goiteoure [Coideber, in a preceding clause,] and the afore-said Thomas recovered that land, before the above mentioned Justices of King Henry, the father of the present King, by a verdict of twelve Jurors. And he says precisely, the Welsh have always to this day used the same law, &c. And he says that it is right for the King to correct the laws and customs.

Howel Vychan—agrees in all things with the fore-going.

Adam Cornatun*—says that he has not seen any litigation concerning land amongst the Nobility, as he is but middle-aged. He says also that those laws have always been in use, which the predecessors of the present King have acted upon. But that in suits concerning land, and in other things of magnitude, they always have been accustomed to decide by twelve Jurors. Concerning laws and customs voluntary, and permissions to the people, he says expressly that the King could always, at his own will, correct such laws, but not deteriorate them.

Robert Vychan—agrees with the fore-going.

Cadwgan son of Wynne—agrees with the fore-going in all things; adding also that King Henry, the father of the present King, gave the laws and customs which are in use, which he partly corrected. And he says distinctly that the present King if he wills, may at his pleasure amend the laws and customs, for the improvement and general advantage of his land.

Robert the son of Guinne—says that he does not recollect any thing of having seen any suits for land between the Nobles. Concerning the laws and customs and their amendment, he agrees with the preceding. He also says that when the laws and customs happened not to be correct, as often as need was, they should address the King, that he should appoint a Council, &c.

Gruffyth son of Gronwy—says as regards suits for lands, if of one acre only, they are accustomed always to proceed before the King's Bailiff without a writ and by twelve Jurors, &c. And if exceeding one acre, then by a King's writ, and recover in the mode of Inquisition, by twelve Jurors, &c. He says also precisely that in other suits, they ought always to proceed before the King's Justices, by assent of the parties having the election. Concerning amending the laws and customs, he says the King ought to amend them, &c.

David son of Iorwerth—knows nothing of suits between the nobles, but of the other matters, he says that the King ought to amend the laws and customs for the public good, as often as needful.

Cadwgan ab Stocton—has seen nothing of lawsuits, and knows nothing of laws.

* There is a hill called in English Corndon, and in Welsh Carnattyn, in Shropshire, not far from Montgomery.

Iorwerth ap Cadwgan—agrees with Nicholas Brusebon. Speaking of suits, he says that in time of peace, in both courts, as well English as Welsh, proceedings respecting transgressions are carried on by twelve ; but whether so in case of lands, he does not know.

Richard Reuen—knows nothing.

Robert son of Robert—says the same with Iorwerth ap Cadwgan.

Einion de Chirstot—knows nothing.

Roger son of Roger, son of Elie—knows nothing.

Tuder ap Madoc, formerly Bailiff of Kerry and Halsete—says that he has seen that Howel ap Cadwallon, Madoc ap Mailgwn, and Mourice Bariah, for the slaying of William de Moid, by challenge made respecting his death, in the time of King John, before him and his Justices at Bridge North, received judgment there by Inquisition, and were hanged, and thence by judgment were disinherited ; but at the instance of their friends, their sons recovered from the hands of the King, their land hereditary belonging to them, to wit, at the instance of Gruffyth ap Wenhwynwyn, and Thomas Corbet. He also says that he has heard of a suit concerning Gordur [Coedeber,] between the forenamed Gruffyth ap Wenhwynwyn and Thomas Corbet, which was determined before the King's Justices, but before whom he does not know, by a verdict of a jury of twenty-four Knights. He says also that he himself, the said Tuder, recovered a certain land in Mochtreu, before Hunbert de Monteferland, against Einon ap Gronw, and his brother by a verdict of twelve jurors by the mode of Inquisition ; and such is the general method of proceeding in the district of Kerry, according to the laws and customs of those parts. And such are used by the people of Kedewain, so that the mode of Rei Veritas is practised. He says also that the nobility in possession of the land in dispute propose the laws of Howel for the sake of delay, because according to that law there are great delays, nevertheless they proceed with the inquiry by Rei Veritas. He also says that the Prince may amend the laws for the advantage of the country, and especially the King.

From Montgomery the Commissioners proceeded to Llanbadarn Vawr.

Trahaiarn ab Philip—says that all lawsuits and all Imparlanes, have been used to be determined by the Court. And he says that in the county of Cardigan there is not any Judge but the lord and the Court. Being asked if he ever saw any suit amongst the nobility ; he says not. He says notwithstanding, that Llewelyn voluntarily took away from the sons of Meredith ab Owain three Commots, to wit, Geneurghlyn, Creuthyn, and Cwmmwd Pervedd, and gave that land to Rhys ap Wayghan, the son of Rhys ab Mochegun. [Rhys Vychan son of Rhys Mechyll] Being asked if he saw many lawsuits between the nobles, he says not, except on the junction of lands in the manner of a Parliament.

Philip son of Henry—agrees with the fore-said Trahaiarn, adding that neither throughout the whole of West Wales, nor throughout Cardigan, is there any Judge (Ynad.)—Being asked how a suit for land or tenement moved before the King or his Justices amongst the

nobles, ought to be decided ; he says that the truth *Rei Veritas*, ought to be inquired into by equals and neighbours of the parties, not being suspected of either party.

The land of Conan ab Meredyth.

Morgan ab Einion—agrees with the fore-going.

Richard ab Rees—agrees with the fore-going.

The land of Llewelyn ab Owain.

Howel ab Wayghan [H. Vychan ?]—agrees with the fore-going.

Howel ab Cadivor—agrees with the fore-going.

Gryffyth ab Madawc—says that all lawsuits in that Commot are accustomed to be decided by twelve men chosen by the King's Bailiff with consent of the parties.

Meilir ap, Waillauc [Gwallawc or Maelawc ?]—agrees with the fore-going.

Meylir ab Einiawn—agrees with the fore-going.

Madoc ab Iorwerth—says that in that Commot in all lawsuits the Court Judges between the parties ; and he says there is not there any Judge called Ynad.

Rhys ab Ewayn—agrees with the fore-going.

The Abbot of Whitland [de Alba Domo. Y Ty Gwyn ar Dav in Carmarthenshire,]—says the same as Howel son of William,—adding that if any party complains of false judgment, they ought to convoke twelve men from any Liberty together with the Judge of Ystrad Towy ; and if it is made manifest before them it has been wrongly adjudicated, the Court shall be convicted of false Judgment by their decision.

The Abbot of Strata Florida—agrees in all things with the Abbot of Whitland, excepting that he is ignorant respecting that Judge.

Gruffyth son of Meredyth—agrees in every thing with the Abbot of Whitland.

Howel son of William—says that the laws in his parts are these : to wit, if any one claims land against any, the Defendant may make three Defaults, and after Three Defaults the Defendant ought to have summons testificatory, so that when the Defendant shall come into Court, and the Plaintiff shall claim the land of him, the Defendant ought to answer upon the principal Plea, and the whole Court shall judge between them, so that he to whom the Court shall adjudge the land, shall have it, and he says that there is no litigation in any other way. He also says that if a Welsh Baron shall claim land against a Welsh Baron, he ought to claim it before the King and his Justices, and the inquiry ought to be made by their Peers, Welsh Barons, not suspected of either party. Being asked if he saw it thus litigated between any persons ; he says yes ; to wit, between Meredyth ab Owain and Meredyth ab Rhys, in a suit concerning a bridge over the Teivy, at Appar. [? Aberteivy, i. e. Cardigan.] Also, between Rhys

Vychan the son of Rhys ab Maelgwn, of the one part and the son of Meredyth ab Oweyn and the father of Llewelyn. The proceedings were conducted before the said Llewelyn, as far as could be done, but no adjudication was made, on account of war breaking out.

Gruffyth Crach—agrees in all things with the preceding.

Ieuaf ab Maeler—agrees with the fore-going.

Gruffyth ab Meredyth—agrees, &c.

q. Coŷtel ab Madawc—agrees, &c.

Gruffyth Coch—agrees, &c.

Gruffyth son of Guen [q. Owen]—says it is always customary to judge by the Court between all parties. Of other matters he is ignorant, yet he says that he has seen trials concerning thefts and transgressions and they were decided by the Court. Of suits about land he is ignorant.

Iorwerth Goch—says that in all suits he has seen judgment given by the Court, and so it has always been accustomed to be done as he has seen.

Madoc Du—says that in all the country of Powys, to wit, the land of Gruffyth ap Gwenwynwyn, the law and custom is to decide all suits by the Court, and that by Veritas. And he says that formerly there was one there named Iorwerth Vychan ab Iorwerth ab Rhun, who was called Ynad, that is Judge, by name, yet he never adjudicated, but because he went to North Wales to learn the laws of Howel Dda, and thus he acquired the name. Being asked if he was a Judge by hereditary right such as is the custom in North Wales, he says, no. He says also that in demands made for lands or tenements for a hundred years or for a longer time, as well as for demands made for any shorter time, it is customary to judge by the Court and by Veritas.

David Goch—agrees with the fore-going—adding that the lord of the Court should enjoin them respecting the Court, that by the faith in which they are bound to him, they should judge faithfully. And he says that the neighbours of the place in which the disputed land is, should then be in Court, and that they should judge in the matter along with others.

Iorwerth ab Tudur—says that the nearest neighbours of the disputed land, being sworn jurors before the lord or the Bailiff, should inquire about the truth by Veritas and judge according to the truth and Veritas.

Tudur ab Gruffyth—agrees with the last.

Iorwerth ab Cadwgan, Bailiff of Arwystly Uwelgoed—says that when there has been any suit in the Court of his lord, the lord shall enjoin twelve or fewer men of the Court, by the faith in which they are bound to him; or he shall make them swear in the Court before him that they will faithfully inquire respecting the truth, [Veritas,] and judge according to it. And he says expressly that there is no other law or custom in the land of Gruffyth son of Gwenwynwyn.

Gruffyth Voel—agrees with the last.

Meredyth ab Iorwerth—agrees with Iorwerth ab Cadwgan.

Adam ab Einion—agrees, &c.

Gruffyth Person—says that he was in some suit in Court: between certain persons the Plaintiff or Defendant may have their adjournments according as Howel the son of William has deposed, and afterwards the whole Court ought to judge; and thus it has been usual to act from time out of mind. He says also that there is no other judge in those parts but the whole Court.

Llewelyn the Chaplain—agrees in all things with the fore-going.

Philip ab Rees—agrees, &c.

Madoc ab Llewelyn—agrees with the above, and adds that judgment should be given by Free-men and Land-holders, and not by Rustics nor by others not having land.

Philip Vychan—agrees with the fore-going.

Adam ab Howel—agrees, &c.

David ab Gruffyth—agrees, &c.

Gruffyth ab Adda—agrees, &c.

Addaf Vychan—agrees, &c.

Cadwgan Voel—agrees with the fore-going, and adds that if any suspected person should be in Court, so that any party believes that he would decide wickedly and not justly, that suspected person ought to swear in that Court that he will judge faithfully; and he says that such suspected person cannot be set aside because of suspicion.

Gornw ab David—agrees with the fore-going.

Gryffyth ab Howel—agrees in all things, &c."

Thus did the commissioners finish their Inquiry; having examined in all 172 Witnesses; that is, 19 in Chester; 55 in Rhuddlan; 36 in the White Monastery; 22 in Montgomery; and 42 in Llanbadarn Fawr.

In looking for the impression made by the perusal of their depositions, I find them to be the following:

In the first place, we must recollect that the Commission was held by the King's appointment, for the purpose of forwarding a plan which he had formed for bringing the country under the jurisdiction of his own Courts.

Next,—The Commission extended no farther than the Four Cantreds, and the adjacent land belonging to the King, so that there was a considerable portion of the Principality that did not come within the range of the Commissioners; for instance, the whole of Llewelyn's territory in Snowdonia and Anglesey, and all the territories of the Lords Marchers, who were as yet much too powerful for the King to meddle with their Laws and forms of Court.

And lastly,—Whatever bias may have been shewn by the witnesses or others, it is impossible to deny that the Welsh were at this time, as they had been for at least some generations, engaged in reforming their own laws; and there can be no reason to doubt the statement, that Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, the Grandfather of the reigning Prince, Llewelyn ap Gruffyth, had introduced some improvements into the practice of the law, part of which alteration consisted in a sort of *Trial by Jury*; but whether by borrowing from the Anglo Norman Code, or by a national developing of the social elements, independent of any extraneous impulse, this is not the place to inquire. However this may be, it is very evident, that though the Welsh Princes were at this time beginning to introduce some innovations into their national Code, yet it by no means follows that they wished to adopt the whole of the English system; which then so abounded with imperfections, that the mixed style of legislation, such as the witnesses state to have been in use amongst the Welsh, formed partly of the old Welsh Laws of Howel Dda, and partly of the new practice of the English Courts, must have been much preferable to the English system of that day in its entirety. And the fact seems evident, that they did not want the wholesale reform that Edward had in view to thrust upon them.

But whatever Edward's intentions, or his wishes may have been, his plans were unexpectedly deranged, for Llewelyn and his countrymen, unable to endure longer the oppressions which they were suffering from Edward's subjects, at once broke out into open war, which continued for two years, and terminated only upon the death of Llewelyn, and of his brother David; of whom Llewelyn was slain, in 1282, and David was put to death the following year. Edward then assumed the government of the country; and soon after proceeded to annex the whole of Llewelyn's dominion to the Crown of England; which he did by an Act, passed at Rhuddlan, in the year 1284, called the Statute of Rhuddlan, [Statutum de Rothelan,] and also spoken of as the Statutum Walliæ, or the Statute of Wales: of which the following is the substance, as given by Wotton, from a book of Statutes in the Exchequer:

“EDWARD, by the Grace of God, King of England, Lord of Ireland, and Duke of Aquitaine, to all his faithful subjects of his land of Snowdon, and all his other lands in Wales, Health in the Lord. Divine Providence, which in His disposal does not fail, amongst other gifts with which He has thought worthy to honour Us and our Kingdom, the land of Wales together with its inhabitants having been subjected to us in Feodal right, now by his Grace, all obstacles whatever ceasing, he has totally and entirely converted the same into our own proper Dominion, and has annexed it to the Crown and Kingdom aforesaid as a part of the same body, We therefore, by Divine direction, desiring to govern our said land of Snowdon, and our other lands in those parts, in like manner with others subject to our control, to the Honour and praise of God and of the Holy Church, and to the zeal for justice, under due regulation, together with the people and inhabitants of those lands, who from high to low have submitted themselves to our Will, and to bring such as we have thus received unto our Will, to certain laws and customs and under tranquillity and our peace, we have caused to be recited before us and our peers the laws and customs of those parts, hitherto used, which having attentively heard, and fully understood, some of them by the council of our foresaid Peers we have annulled, some we have permitted, and some we have amended, and some others we have decreed to add and enact, and finally, these, throughout all our lands in those Parts, we will to be maintained in perpetual firmness, in the following form.

We provide and decree that the Justice of Snowdon shall have keeping and Government of the Peace of our Kingdom in Snowdon, and of our other adjacent Lands of Wales ; and he shall exhibit justice to all whatsoever, according to the original King's Writs, and the following Laws and Customs.

We will also and decree that there be Sheriffs, Coroners, and Bailiffs of Commots in Snowdon, and in our lands in those Parts.

The Sheriff of Anglesey, under whom shall be the whole land of Anglesey, with Cantreds, Metes, and Bounds.

The Sheriff of Caernarvon, under whom the Cantred of Arvon, the Cantred of Arllechwedd, the Common of Creiddyn, the Cantred of Llleyn, the Commot of Eivionyth.

The Sheriff of Meirionyth under whom the Cantred of Meirionyth, the Commot of Ardudwy, the Commot of Penllyn and the Commot of Dareynion, with their Metes and Bounds.

The Sheriff of Flint, under him the Cantred of Englefield [Tegengel] the Land of Meylor Seysnek [Bromfielt] the Land of Hope [Estyn] and all the land adjoining the new Castle and Town of Rhuddlan, as far as Chester. For the rest, as regards their attendance, as also that of certain other Commots, let it be before our Justice at Chester, and let them answer at our Exchequer of Chester.

There shall be Coroners in the said Counties, chosen by the King's Writ, whose order will be found amongst the original Writs of the Chancellor.

There shall also be Bailiffs of Commots who, shall faithfully do and perform their duty, according to what shall be enjoined them by the Justices and Sheriffs.

The Sheriff of Caermarthen with its ancient Cantreds, and Commots, and Metes and Bounds. The Sheriff of Cardigan and Llanbadarn, with their Cantreds, Commots, and Metes and Bounds.

Coroners shall be in those Counties, and Bailiffs of Commots, as before said.

OF THE OFFICE OF SHERIFF IN WALES AND THE MODE OF HOLDING THE COUNTIES.

The Sheriff ought to exercise his Office, in this form, to wit : When any one shall complain to him of any Transgression, done to him against the Peace of the Lord the King, whether of seizing, and unjust Detention of Wages, or of unlawful Distrain, or of broken contract, and such like, by Writ or without Writ ; First of all he shall take security for his prosecuting his claim, or he shall receive his Faith, if he be poor ; and afterwards he shall proceed to execution, as is more fully declared in this manner. The Defendants shall, in every case, be summoned to be at the next County Court to answer the Plaintiffs. To which Court, Summons being made and witnessed, if they do not come they shall, with the concurrence of the Court, be again summoned that they answer at next Court, as before. To which if they do not come, the summonses shall be repeated and witnessed by the deliberation of the Court, they shall be summoned a third time that they be at the next, the third Court, to answer, as before. To which Court if they do not come, from that time the Plaintiffs, by the consideration as well in suits by writ as in complaints without Writ, shall recover their requests, with damages or amends, as well in moveables as in immoveables according as the actions require, and for defaults of this description, a penalty shall, according to the Welsh Law and Custom, be incurred to the Lord the King. And when the Parties shall appear for the purpose of pleading, each stating his own case, it shall be admitted without hindrance, and according to the Petitions answers and allegations on all sides, the Court shall proceed to judgment for the Plaintiff or the Defendant, and according to the quality and amount of his offence shall he be punished.

And be it known that thus the Court ought to be held ; to wit— from month to month in the place where the Lord the King shall appoint, and this on Monday in one Court, on Tuesday in another Court, on Wednesday in the third Court, and on Thursday in the fourth Court, and upon other days. And the Sheriff shall thus proceed to hold his Court.

First, he shall hear and receive before him and the Coroner and Followers of the Court, Presentations of Felonies and Accidents, which may have happened between two Courts, respecting the death of a person, in such a manner as that the four Villages, nearest to the place where the case of homicide or accident has occurred, shall come to the next Court, along with the finder, and the Walsherie, that is the kindred of the person slain, and there shall present the fact of the Felony, the case of the accident, and the manner of each occurrence, stating that on such a day and in such a place, it happened that such a person known or unknown, was found feloniously slain, or drowned, or in some other way dead from accident, and that such a one found him, who is now present, &c. And that presentation shall be immediately enrolled, as well in the Coroner's Roll, as in the Roll of the

Sheriff. And if there shall be any man or woman, who will prosecute by appeal, let security to prosecute be immediately taken, and let the Appeal be brought forward in that Court, so that if the Appellees appear they may be immediately taken, and detained in the prison of the Lord the King until the arrival of the Justices, and safely kept. And if they should not appear, then let them be at the prosecution of the Appellor summoned from Court to Court, And if they shall not come at the fourth Court, or shall not be taken, let them be outlawed; and let the women be waived. And if at the first Court to which they shall be summoned, they do not appear, their lands and Chattels shall be immediately taken and seized upon into the hand of the King, and be delivered over for custody to the authorities as below.

In like manner shall proceedings be conducted in an Appeal concerning Theft, Maiming, Forcible stealing, Burning and Robbery against the Appellees, if they do not appear. And if they do appear and find sufficient Bails, six at least or more, standing upright at the arrival of the Judge, they shall immediately be bailed.

And be it known that against the Appellees, by Force, Command, Mission, or Recapture to outlawry, however any person may be convinced of the fact :

The Sheriff shall hold his Tourn in each of his Commots twice a year, in any certain appointed place, to wit : Once after the Feast of St. Michael, and once after Easter ; to which Tourn, all Freeholders, and other Landholders, and residing in that Commot, at the time of the Summons of holding the Tourn, excepting Religious orders, Clergy and Women, should come there. And the Sheriff by the oath of twelve Freeholders, of the most discreet and knowing, or of more, at the discretion of the Sheriff, shall diligently inquire concerning the under-named Headings touching the Crown of the Lord the King.

Of the deceivers of the Lord the King, and of his Kingdom, and of His Lady the Queen and their children, and of those consenting to it.

Of Thieves, Homicides, Robbers, Murderers, Incendiaries feloniously causing Fires, and their receivers, and those consenting to them.

Of Butchers knowingly buying and selling stolen meat.

Of Whittanwariis, to wit, those who knowingly whiten stolen Ox and Horse skins so that they may not be known.

Of Transformers of Stolen Clothes, reducing them to a new form and changing the old, so as to make a Tunic or a Supertunic out of a Mantle, and the like.

Of Outlaws, and of the Return of those who have abjured the Kingdom.

Of those who against the arrival of the Judge withdraw themselves; and after his departure return.

Of the Rape of Holy Virgins, and of Matrons honestly living.

Of Treasure found.

Of the Highway, and its branches.

Of Highway obstructed, or narrowed, or broken up.

Of Walls, Houses, Gates, Ditches and Marlpits dug and made near the public way, to the injury of the Road itself and to the danger of travellers, and concerning the erectors and makers of the same.

Of the Counterfeitors of Money and of the King's Seal.

Of Offenders in Parks and Warrens.

Of Breaking the King's Prison.

Of catching Pigeons, flying out of the Dove-houses.

Of those committing Pauntbreche, that is of the Breakers of Parks in which animals are imparked.

Of Forestalls, that is, of withholding wages.

Of Homesockne. that is, of House-invading.

Of Thefbote, i. e. the carrying off stolen property, without the consent of the King's Court.

Of Imprisoning any Freemen whatsoever.

Of Usurers.

Of removing and confusing boundaries. [Divisas, q. Boundaries or Tithes separated.]

Of the Assize of Bread and Ale not attended to, and of persons infringing.

Of unjust Bushels, Gallons, and other measures ; and those selling by them.

Of unjust Ells and weights, and those selling by them.

Of those lodging Strangers beyond one night.

Of Blood-shed.

Of a Hue and Cry raised.

Of shearing Sheep in the folds by night, and flaying the same, or other animals.

Of Taking and Collecting Corn by night in the Autumn, and carrying it away, and of all other similar offences.

Inquiry shall be made respecting the Rights of the King taken away. As of Custodies, Wards, Marriages, Relevés [a kind of Heriot.] Feods, Advowsons of Churches, if any have been in the Divisions of Counties and Commots, who took them away, and at what time. And of those who appropriated to themselves Jura Regalia without warrant, as The Gallows, The amending of the Assize of the Bread and Ale, Suit of the Law concerning illegal Distraint ; and other Rights of this kind, which specially, and by prerogative appertain to the Court of the Lord the King.

The Sheriff therefore, in making his Visit and his Tourn, shall immediately at the commencement, cause to assemble before him all the whole Commot, and cause them to swear that they will present the truth to the twelve jurors or more, who shall be chosen by the Sheriff, and that they will not conceal any truth or say any thing false of those concerning whom the shall be examined of them on the part of the King. And the oath being taken, he shall explain to them the above written Heads, and shall enjoin them that they carefully inquire the truth respecting each of them. And if any should be found who for Witchcraft ought to lose their life or limbs, let their names be intimated secretly to the Sheriff, lest being thus indicted, if present in the Tourn, they should flee if they be indicted publicly. With regard to other Heads, they may well be openly and publicly answered, and their verdict rendered ; and then let them be told that they all of them

go apart, and let them carefully consider and inquire about those things which have been enjoined them, and when they have been well certified, let them return and render and present their verdict.

The Sheriff, in admitting Verdicts and Recognizances, shall not seek occasion against the Presenters, nor shall he take of them payment for the privilege of exemption. The verdict or Presentation, therefore, being received, the Sheriff shall immediately, or as soon as he can, take those indicted of Witchcraft, whose punishment is death or loss of limbs, and shall detain them in prison or dismiss them on Bail. And of the other Heads, according to the Inquiry, let immediate correction be done and due execution in all and every thing aforesaid.

The Bailiffs of Commots in other matters shall hold their own Commots and do and exercise justice between litigants.

OF THE OFFICE OF CORONER, TO WIT, OF THE CROWN PLEAS IN WALES.

It is provided, that in every Commot of Wales there shall be one Coroner, at least, who by a King's Writ, in the form contained amongst the other Royal Writs in the following Roll, shall be elected in full Court, and shall there before the sheriff make oath that he will be faithful to the King, and that he will faithfully do and perform all things that belongs to the office of Coroner. And his office shall be that immediately after he has been required of any person, to come and view any dead person, slain feloniously, or drowned, or otherwise dead through mischance, and also to see a person grievously wounded, whose life is despaired of, that he shall immediately send to the Sheriff or Bailiff of the Commot, that he shall cause to come before him on a certain day and in a certain place, all persons of twelve years of age and upwards, of that town in which the occurrence took place, and of the four nearest villages, and by their oath he shall faithfully, cautiously, and secretly and diligently inquire concerning the Felony and the Felons, and their chattels; in like manner concerning the fact and the manner of the fact, to wit, who was guilty of the fact; who of force, and what kind of force; who of command or orders, and who of harbouring after the fact, and of the Chattels of those persons who by the Inquiry may be in those things found guilty. He shall also inquire who first found the person slain, and his name shall be enrolled, and he shall be bound by Bails, whose names shall be enrolled, to come to the next Court, and also before the Judge at his arrival. And that such Inquiry being ordered, it shall immediately be caused to be distinctly and openly enrolled, together with the names of those who may have been found guilty, and their Chattels, and that the written names of the same shall be delivered to the Sheriff, if he be present, or to the Bailiff of the Commot, secretly with a command on the part of the King, that their bodies may be immediately taken, and that they be safely kept in the King's prison, until they shall have done what is right in the King's Court, and their Chattels faithfully appraised, and as well those chattels whose price is particularly set in the Roll, and the same chattels by the view of the Sheriff or Bailiff and other faithful subjects of the King, who may be in each of the Villages, in which the Chattels of the foresaid may be found, shall be entirely delivered over, so that at the arrival of the Judge they may faithfully answer to the King.

The Coroner also, when he makes Inquest on the Dead, shall inquire of the Walesherie, to wit, the kindred of the slain, and if any one on the part of the Father, and another on the part of the Mother shall appear, saying that they are of his kindred, and this shall be testified to by faithful subjects of the King there present, their names shall immediately be enrolled in the Roll. But if none of his kindred shall appear, then shall it in like manner be enrolled in the Roll, that none appears, that the Judge may at his arrival show what in this case is to be done.

The Coroner also shall diligently inquire respecting the cause of the mischance, and its manner, and according as shall be found by the Inquest, he shall cause to be distinctly enrolled. He shall also inquire concerning the Finder, and shall cause his name to be enrolled, as above.

Moreover, when a Thief or a Murderer, or other Malefactor shall flee to a Church, the Coroner shall, as soon as he can arrange, order the King's Bailiff of that Commot, that he shall on a certain day cause to come before him good men and loyal of that Venue, and having in their presence made recognition of the Felony, he shall cause abjuration to be made in this manner, that the Felon be conducted to the Church Door, and a Seaport shall be assigned him by the Coroner, and thenceforth he shall abjure the Kingdom; and according as he shall be assigned a Seaport either near or distant, his limits of passage through the aforesaid Kingdom shall be such that in going towards that seaport, carrying a certain Cross in his hand, he shall not deviate from the King's high way in any manner, that is, to the right nor to the left, but shall always keep to it as long as he passes through the Kingdom.

FORMS OF ORIGINAL KING'S WRITS OF PLEADINGS IN WALES.

WRIT OF NEW DISSEIZIN OF A FREE TENEMENT, OF WHICH A FREEMAN
HAS BEEN UNJUSTLY AND WITHOUT JUDGMENT DISSEIZED.
OF A NEW DISSEIZIN OF COMMON PASTURE.

The King to the Sheriff of Anglesey, Health—Complaint has been made to us by A that B and C have unjustly and without judgment disseized him of his Freehold in N since our Peace in Wales, proclaimed in the eleventh year of our Reign, and therefore we command thee that if the aforesaid shall make thee secure, in prosecuting his claim, then thou shall cause that Tenement to be reseized of the chattels which were taken in it, and the Tenement itself with the chattels to be in peace until a certain day which our Justice shall make known to thee. And in the mean time he shall cause twelve free and legal men of that Venue to view that tenement, and their names to be inbriefed. And summon them by good Summoners, that they be then before our foresaid Justice ready there to make recognition. And place under surety and safe Bails the aforesaid B and C, or their Bailiffs if they themselves shall not be found, that then they be there to hear that recognition. And thou shouldest have there the names of the Bails summoned and this Writ. Given at Caernarvon, such a year and such a day, or elsewhere.

OF A NEW DISSEIZIN OF COMMON PASTURE.

A has complained to us that B and C have unjustly &c. disseized him of his Common Pasture in N which belongs to his Freehold in the same Town [or in another, if the case requires this] after our Peace, &c. And therefore we command thee that if the foresaid A shall make thee secure &c. then thou shalt cause twelve Free men &c. to view that Pasture and Tenement and their names to be inbriefed. And summon them by good Summoners that they then be before our Justice &c. there ready to make recognition. And place under securities and safe Bails the foresaid B and C or their Bailiffs if they themselves shall not be found, that they then be there to hear that recognition. And thou shalt have there &c. Given &c.

OR THUS.

A has complained to us that B has unjustly &c. taken up or pulled down a certain hedge or a certain ditch ; or has obstructed or broken up a certain way ; or has diverted the course of a certain water ; or has raised or lowered or highered a certain pool in N to the injury of his Freehold in that Town [or elsewhere if such is the case] since the Peace &c. And therefore we command thee if the foresaid A shall make thee Secure &c. then thou shalt cause twelve &c. to view that hedge or ditch, or that way, or that water course, or that pool and tenement, and their names to be inbriefed. And Summon them &c. that they be before our Justices &c. ready &c. And place under Bail &c. the aforesaid B or his Bailiff, that he then may be &c. And thou shalt have &c. Given &c.

And the forms of Writs shall be altered according to the difference of cases.

WRITS CONCERNING THE DEATH OF AN ANTECESSOR.

The King to the Sheriff, Health. If A shall make thee secure of prosecuting his claim, then thou shalt Summon by good Summoners twelve free and lawful men of the Venue of N, that they be before our Justices ready upon oath to ascertain if the father of the aforesaid A was seized in his Lordship of a Fee-farm of such a Manor, with its appurtenances, or of so much land with its appurtenances on the day he died, and if he died since our peace in Wales, proclaimed in the eleventh year of our Reign, and if the same A is his nearest heir ; and in the mean time they shall view that Manor or that land, and thou shalt cause their names to be inbriefed. And Summon by good Summoners C who holds that Manor, or that Land, that he then be there to hear that recognition. And thou shalt there have the Summons and this Writ. Given, &c.

And let there be Letters Patent under these words as far as the King shall thence Order. The King to his Justice, Health. Know ye that we constitute you our Justice, together with those whom you shall bring with you associated to the Assizes of New Disseizen and Death of an Antecessor, to be held in Parts of Wales. And thus we command you that at certain days and places, which he shall appoint for this purpose, ye shall hold those Assizes, performing there what appertains to Justice, according to the Law and Custom of our King-

dom, Saving to us our Amerciaments, and other things belonging to us. We have therefore commanded our Sheriffs that at certain days and places, which ye shall make known to them, for this purpose, they shall cause those Assizes to be held before you. In witness of which matter we have caused these our Letters Patent to be made known to you.

And there shall be a Close Writ to the Sheriff to direct the order of the Justice, in this form.

The King to the Sheriff, Health. We command thee that thou cause all Assizes of New Disseizin and Death of Antecessor, arraigned by our Writs before our Justice, to be held before the same Justice at certain times and places that he shall make known to thee, with the Original Writs, attachments, and all other particulars touching the said Assizes, and this Writ. Given &c.

And the form of the Writ shall be altered according to the difference of Cases : to wit, if a Father, or Mother, or Brother, or Sister, or an Uncle or Aunt has been seized in his Lordship as of a Fee-farm, of the matter claimed, by way of the Death of an Antecessor, on the day he died. And when several co-heirs and participators in any inheritance claim the same ; to wit, when one of them claims by the Death of his Father and Mother, Brother or Sister, Uncle or Aunt ; and another or others of the same co-heirs, claim by the Death of a Grandfather or Grandmother, or of a male or female Cousin, let them have a Writ of Death of Antecessor according to their case, because that part of foresaid Writ which touches the nature of the Death of Antecessor, according to the Article thence in use, draws to it the nature of other Articles, touching the Co-heirs in more remote degrees.

A COMMON WRIT WHICH IN ANY CASE TOUCHES RIGHT,
AND IN ANY POSSESSION.

The King to the Sheriff, Health. Command A that he justly and without delay restore to B the Manor of N with its appurtenances, of which the aforesaid A deforciates him, as he says ; and unless he shall do that, and if the aforesaid B shall make thee secure of prosecuting his claim, then Summon by good Summoners the aforesaid A that he shew before our Justice, wherefore he has not done it. And thou shalt have there the Sum. and this Writ. Given &c.

OR THUS.

Command A that he justly &c. restore to B so much land with its appurtenances in N as above. And in-like manner shall be granted that Writ before the Justice on the Bench if the Plaintiff wishes it.

WRIT OF DOWER IN WALES.

The King to the Sheriff, Health. Command A that he justly and without delay restore to B, who was the Wife of C, her reasonable Dower, which has continged to her from a Freehold which belonged to her former husband in N, from whence she has nothing, as she says, and whence she complains that the aforesaid A deforciates her. And unless he shall do so, and the aforesaid B makes thee secure of prose-

cuting her claim, then Summon by good Summoners, &c. that he be before our Justice &c. to show &c. And thou shalt have there the Summons and this Writ. Given &c.

And the form of the Writ shall be altered according to the diversity of cases, to wit, if the woman shall have been dowered at the Church Door with the Assent and free will of the father, or other antecessor whose heir she might or ought to be.

A WRIT OF DEBT.

The King to the Sheriff, Health. Command A that he justly and without delay render to B a hundred shillings which he owes him and unjustly detains, as he says. And unless he shall so do, and the aforesaid B shall make thee secure of prosecuting his claim, then Summon by good Summoners, the foresaid A that he be before our Justice to show wherefore he has not done it. And thou shalt have there the Summons and this Writ. Given &c.

And if any Chattels or Sacks of Wool shall be wanting, let it be written under the Writ. The King to the Sheriff, Health. Command A that he justly and without delay, deliver to B one Sack of Wool of the price of ten marks which he unjustly detains from him, or Chattels to the value of ten marks which he unjustly withholds from him, as he says, and unless he does so &c. as above.

And let the forms of the consimilar Writ be according to the showing of the Plaintiffs and the diversities of Cases. And Writs of Debt of this kind shall not be tried before a Justice for a smaller sum than Forty Shillings; but Pleas of Debt which do not amount to Forty Shilling shall be tried in the County Court and in the Commot alike. And if by chance the Plaintiff will sue in this manner in the County Court, then let such a writ be made for him as is called a Justicies.

The King to the Sheriff, Health. We command thee that thou justiciate A that he justly and without delay pays B a hundred Shillings, which he owes him, as he says, as he can reasonably show that he owes him, that we hear no more complaint thence through defect of justice. Given &c.

OR THUS.

That he restore him One Sack of Wool worth ten marks, which he unjustly detains; or Chattels to the value of ten marks which he unjustly detains from him, as he says, as he is able reasonably to show, that we be no more &c. Given &c.

And a Pone shall be granted, if required, in this form.

The King to the Sheriff, Health. Lay at the request of the Plaintiff, before the Justice &c. on such a day the Impartance which is in the County Court by our Writ between A and B, concerning a Debt of a hundred Shillings which the same requires of the aforesaid B and Summon by our good Summoners the aforesaid B that he then be these to answer thence the aforesaid A. And thou shalt have there the Summons and this Writ, and the other Writ. Given &c.

A WRIT OF AGREEMENT.

The King to the Sheriff, Health. Command A that he justly and without delay fulfil to A the agreement made betwixt them concern-

ing one' messuage [with the whole] of ten acres of land and five acres of Wood with the appurtenances in N. And unless he does it &c. then Summon the aforesaid A that he is, &c. to shew &c. Given &c.

And let Writs of Agreement be according to the complaints of the contractors, and the differences of cases, either before the Justices or in the County Court, according to the will of the Plaintiffs. And if they wish to proceed in the County Court, let them have a Writ called a Justicies, and afterwards a Pone may be granted if required.

THE FORM OF WRIT OF ATTORNEY.

The King to the Sheriff, Health. Know ye that A has appointed attorneys before us B and C to gain or lose in the suit which is before you by our Writ between him A the Plaintiff and D the Defendant, concerning one Messuage with its appurtenances in N. We therefore command you receive the foresaid B and C, or either of them if they both cannot be present, in the place of the said A himself, towards the conducting of this proceeding. Given &c.

And in this manner shall Writs of Attorneys be made out in other cases, according to the diversities of cases and forms of Writs.

FORM OF WRIT FOR THE ELECTING OF A CORONER.

The King to the Sheriff, Health. We command thee that in thy full County Court, with the assent of the same Court, thou dost cause to be chosen one Coroner, who having taken the Oath, as is customary, shall thenceforth do and maintain those things which belong to the Office of Coroner in the said County, and thou shalt cause such a man to be chosen as may best know and fulfil his duty, and thou shalt cause his name to be made known to us. Given &c.

And if he should become infirm or die, or from any other cause be unable to perform his duty, then let another writ be made out, *mutatis mutandis*.

Certain Pleadings shall be terminated by Assize. Others by Juries.

By Assize they shall be determined when any being seised of a Freehold, is afterwards disseised by force and seeks to have his seizin restored. And in this case there is provided a Writ of New disseisin, in the form above given amongst other original Cancellary Writs. In like manner concerning common pasture; when any one being disseised of his common pasture belonging to his Freehold, seeks to have his seisin restored, and in this case there is provided the same Writ of New Disseisin by changes of certain words in the form, among other original Cancellary Writs above given, in which writs the following proceedings are to be observed.

First of all, having received of the Plaintiff two Bails for prosecuting, the Sheriff shall cause to be chosen twelve free and lawful men &c. of the Venue where the Tenement or Pasture is, and shall cause them to view the Tenement, and likewise the Pasture, and shall attach the Disseisors, as is contained in the Writ, afterwards when the Parties and the Assize come before the Justice, he shall inquire of

the Plaintiff of what Freehold, or of what Common Pasture he complains of being disseised, and according to his complaint and the answer of the adverse party he shall proceed to take the assize, unless the Disseisor knows any reason why the Assize should be stayed. And if the Assize shall make for the Plaintiff, the Plaintiff shall recover his Seisin together with damages, taxed by the Assize, against the Disseisor, and the Disseisor shall remain at the mercy of the King, or committed to Goal to be redeemed, if the Disseisin shall have been enormous, and with armed force.

There are certain other Writs, which are to be decided by Assize, to wit: Of a Pool raised, or broken up, or filled; of a Ditching taken up or broken down, a hedge taken up or levelled, a way obstructed or broken up, a water course turned. And according to the diversity of cases shall the original writs be varied, which writs are contained above in the forenamed Roll along with the writs of New Disseisin, and in the same manner as above said in the Writ of Freehold and of Common Pasture shall the proceeding be in them.

In the above mentioned Writs of Assize of New Disseisin, no Essoin or Delay shall lie, but on the first day shall Justice be proceeded with.

Another is a Writ of Assizes when any one claims Seisin of a Tenement of which his Antecessor died seised, to wit, his Father, Brother Uncle, or Grandfather; in which case is provided a Writ of Death of Antecessor, in a form contained amongst the other original Writs in the foregoing Roll.

It also sometimes happens that the Seisin of Antecessor is claimed in a case in which the Antecessor did not die seised, but he was seised on the day when he took a Religious Habit, or a journey of Pilgrimage &c. And if the journey &c. In that Writ of Antecessor the following is the proceeding.

First. Bails for prosecution being found, and the Assize chosen, and a view being made by the jury, let the Defendant be summoned by two good and legal Summoners that he be before the Justice at a certain day &c. And let the Summons contain fifteen days at least, on which day if he come, the Justice shall proceed to execute his office; and if he come not on that day, let him be punished for his default, according to what is contained in the Welsh Law, to wit, by Three Cows, or by their value, and let him be resummoned by two other Summoners, the Summons likewise containing a space of fifteen days, as aforesaid; on which day whether he comes or not the Justice shall proceed to do his duty, unless he shall have caused himself to be essoined beyond the sea, and then shall be given him the space of forty days that he may have Ebb and Flood. But let him beware whoever essoines himself that being within the four Seas, he do not falsely essoin himself beyond sea, and of this shall they be convinced by good proof or by good inquiry. Let him be punished, nevertheless, for his default, first by Mercy, according to what is contained in the Welsh Law, and let him be precluded from saying any thing against the Assize, unless he can appeal to a Warrant.

And be it known that neither in the Writ of Death of Antecessor, nor in any writ of plea of land, does any Essoin lie, excepting only an Essoin beyond the Sea, and the Defendant or Deforciant maintaining

this shall appear in Court and essoin himself as in the service of the King, which lies in every part of the Plea, when the King will warrant it. But let him beware that he do not cause himself to be falsely essoined as in the King's service, because if he is deficient of the King's Warrant, he shall be punished for his default at the King's Mercy, giving according to the Welsh Law, and to the adverse party towards refunding his expenses of that action, according to the discretion of the Justice.

In those Writs of Death of Antecessor, the following is the proceeding.

The Writ containing the petition of the Plaintiff being first read, it shall be demanded of the Deforciant if he knows any reason why the assize should be stayed; which if he does not know, the Justice shall take the assize by the jurors who best know the truth according to the form of the Writ. And if the Assize shall go for the Plaintiff, the Seissin shall be adjudged to the Plaintiff with costs taxed by the jury, and the Deforciant shall remain at the King's Mercy.

The Deforciant can indeed say much against the Assize. For he can appeal to a Warrant, and then the arrival of the Warrant is to be waited for, which the Justice shall cause to come; first by one Summons, and if necessary by a Re-Summons, as is said of the principal Deforciant, and for his default he shall be punished as is aforesaid. After the Re-Summons if he does not yet come nor essoin himself, the Assize shall proceed against him by default. And if the Assize shall go for the Plaintiff, the Seisin of the property claimed shall be adjudged to the Plaintiff, and the Deforciant shall have of the land to the value of the Warrant. If however the Warrant shall arrive and he be demanded to shew on what account he ought to warrant, the appellant must shew a writing which makes mention of a Warrant, or of a gift made by Warrant, or by his Antecessor whose heir he is, in which mention is made that the tenure ought to be of the Feoffer and his heirs, or that he show that the Warranted is seized of his homage for the disputed tenement, that he has inquired if it should be stated by them, in whose presence he says that he has done homage, at the same time with other free and lawful sworn men, or that he holds that tenement in exchange for another tenement. If by this the Deforciant can bring forward his Warrant into a Warranting, he will remain at the mercy of the King, because he ordered him to warrant, and nevertheless he shall warrant, and shall answer at the assize, if he wills.

Many other things can the Deforciant say against the Assize, to wit, that the Antecessor of whose Death &c. committed felony for which he was hanged, outlawed, or fleeing as a public thief, and not surrendering himself to Justice, he was beheaded, or if confessing his felony before the Coroner, he abjured Wales.

The Deforciant also may object to the Plaintiff, Bastardy, and then shall the Bishop of the Place be commanded that he inquire into the truth of this, and he shall certify on the matter the Chief Justice of Wales, and according to what the Bishop shall certify shall judgment be proceeded with, without taking an Assize. And if the Bishop shall declare he is a Bastard, he shall be precluded from suing; and if he declare that he is legitimate, the Justice shall by Summons cause the Deforciant to come, and if needful by Re-summons the King's mercy for default, being reserved as has been often said. After Re-summons,

whether he comes or not, the Plaintiff shall recover his demand by the testimony of the Bishop, in opposition to whose testimony no other is believed, and he shall remain at the mercy of the King.

Many other things may he say, which it would be difficult to enumerate. Such as that the Antecessor, concerning whose death the Assize has been arraigned, was a Villain and held his land in Villainage, and that he held at will, or for a term of life, or of years, in which cases an Assize of Death of Antecessor does not lie.

The above named Assizes of New Disseisin and Death of Antecessor must not be taken excepting in their proper Counties, that the trouble and the expenses of the Country be not overcharged. But Assizes shall be taken by the Justices twice, thrice, or four times a year.

Mention has been made in part of Writs of Assize and their process; now it shall be stated respecting Pleas to be decided by Inquisitions or by Juries of which some are concerning immoveable matters, as Tenements, or of moveables, as Debts and Chattels, some concerning both: some concerning Transgressions. But first, of Tenements and Immoveables something is to be said, of which a Writ is provided, the form of which is contained amongst other Writs of those departments.

The process of that Writ is as follows;—

First, Bails being found for prosecuting, the Sheriff shall cause the Defendant to be Summoned by good Summoners that he attend on a certain day, on which if he come not, let there be another Summons for another day, on which if he do not come, let him be summoned to attend on a third day, on which if he does not come, nor cause himself to be essoined, the Seisin shall be adjudged to the Plaintiff by default, and the Deforciant shall be at the King's Mercy; nevertheless the King's mercy shall be reserved for any default whatever as aforesaid.

When however the Deforciant shall make it appear that by the words of the Writ the Petition of the Plaintiff cannot be known, on account that the causes of petitioning are manifold, and as it were infinite, it is necessary that he who petitions should declare against the Deforciant, and express the object of his petition, and this in words containing truth, without calumny of words, not attending to that hard usage 'whoso falls in a syllable, falls in the whole cause.'

On the causes of petitioning, what they are, and what they ought to be, it is expedient that something should be briefly said.

"Frequently the Plaintiff possesses a right, through the fact that his Antecessor held the land claimed, and was thence seised of it as by right and by Feoff, and then the Plaintiff finds it needful to declare the parental descent, descending to himself. It happens also that some one may demit his land to the end of life, or of years of which termination the land ought to revert to himself, or to his heir; or again, it ought to revert to himself after the death of a woman holding it in dower; or as escheated after the death of a Bastard holding it, who cannot have an heir except of his body lawfully begotten; or after the death of a Felon, holding it. In the four preceding cases, or after the death of any one of them, the land ought to remain to another in the form of a gift. In these cases, and the like, the Plaintiff ex-

presses his petition according to his case ; and in those cases and their consimilar in which the foresaid Writ is to be used, that and no other shall be used ; and the Petition of the Plaintiff being heard, the Defendant may have a view of the land, if he desires, and let a day be named within which the view shall be made. And let the Deforciant answer on a given day after the view, and he may appeal to a Warrant by the aid of the Court, as it is said in the Writ of death of Antecessor ; and the Justice may cause the Warranted to come as he caused the principal Deforciant, by one Summons, and if needful by a second and third, at which if he does not come, let him be fined for the default as is aforesaid and let the Seizin of the property claimed be adjudged to the Plaintiff by the default of the Warranted, and the Deforciant shall have of the land of the Warranted according to value and the Warranted shall be at Mercy. If the Warranted shall come and shall have Warrantized himself freely, he shall be received to his answer, and the defence of his suit without having a view of the land. But if he shall have refused to Warrantize, let the plea be conducted between them concerning the Warrant, according to what has been above said in the Writ of death of Antecessor. But if the Deforciant shall object against the Plaintiff that his Antecessor whose Seizin he claims, or any one in the descent was a Bastard, so that from him or by his means nothing can descend to him, let he be heard, or let him show the writing of his Antecessors respecting the Feoffment, or of any one in the descent by quiet claim ; and by the affirmation of one party and the denial of the other let the parties come to a legal trial, and the plea shall be decided by a verdict of inquiry, because suits concerning land in those parts are not decided by Duel, nor by the Great Assize. In like manner, if he should object that any one in the Descent has committed Felony by which he is not competent to act, in that case, if he to whom this case is objected shall deny it, the business shall rather be decided by a record of the Justice, or a trial by jury, of Hanging ; and also by a Record of the Coroner of outlawry and abjurament. In like manner in the petition of a Tenement which ought to revert after the decision is past, either by the mode of Gift, by the affirmation of one party and the denial of the other, when recourse shall be had to Trial by Jury, it shall be decided by its verdict."

It is needful to speak of another Article, to wit, of debts of moveables, or chattels, for which it is provided by a Writ of Debt in form following :

" Should this Writ be proceeded by,

First. Bails being found for proceeding, let the Debtor or Offender be Summoned that he be before the Justice on a certain day ; upon which if he do not come, let him be summoned that he be there on the second, and if he come not on the second, nor essoin himself, let the Debt be adjudged to the Plaintiff by Default, along with costs at the discretion of the Judge, or else by a Jury, at the will of the Judge, and let the Debtor be at the Mercy of the King ; Mercy being always reserved to the King in every case of Default. But if the Debtor shall come, it is necessary for the Plaintiff to express his demand, and the amount of his demand, to wit, that he owes him a hundred Marks which he lent him, the day of payment of which has past ; or for land, or for a horse, or for other goods or chattels whatever, sold to him, or for arrears of unpaid Rent accruing from tenements, or concerning any other contracts, of which it is necessary to produce a do-

cument or writing of obligation, or to shew a Tally ; the claim of the Plaintiff being heard and also its amount, the Debtor shall answer, who if he acknowledges the Debt, it shall be adjudged and levied upon lands and chattels &c. If he denies the Debt and brings forward against his Bond, the writing ought to be verified by witnesses named in the Bond, if such there be, together with the jury. And if there be no witnesses named, or if they be dead, it shall be verified only by the jury, and according to the verdict of the jury shall proceeding be had to judgment. But if the Plaintiff has not a Comp, but nevertheless produces an account or Tally, the adverse party may defend [show] that he is in no wise bound, and maintain this by law, to wit by his own oath with eleven sworn men along with him, or by a jury, as he shall choose."

It happens sometimes that a Debtor confesses that formerly he owed him a Debt, and alleges payment, then it behoves him to show an acquittance of the payment, or the Plaintiff may maintain by law that he received nothing, or also by a jury, &c.

That writ of Debt shall not be granted for a smaller sum than forty shillings, because for a smaller debt pleadings are conducted in the County Court without a writ and with a writ.

Of the third article, in which it is provided that there be a writ of compact, by which suits are sometimes had for moveables and sometimes for immoveables, by power of the agreement between the parties ; proceedings are to be had in the form prescribed in the fore-mentioned place.

The process of that writ is the following :

First of all, pledges for prosecution being given, let the accused be summoned once, and if needful, twice, and if he does not come at the second Summons, nor essoins himself, let the prayer of the Plaintiff be heard, and the thing claimed, if it be a tenement, be taken into the hand of the King, and if it be a chattel, let it or its value be taken into the hand of the King, and let another day be appointed, and if within fifteen days he shall redeem the article thus taken into the King's hand and come on the day appointed him, he shall be admitted to an answer and defence. But if not, the Plaintiff shall be adjudged his demand by default, together with taxed costs as aforesaid in the writ of Debt, and he shall remain at the King's mercy, always saving the King's mercy in default, as aforesaid. The Plaintiff's complaint being heard and the amount of his demand, the Defendant may answer, and proceedings shall be had by the affirmation of one party and the denial of the other, according to Inquisition, and the business may be terminated by the Inquisition of a jury.

And be it known, that sometimes a freehold is claimed by a writ of compact, as in the case in which any one lets land to another, thence tendering a certain farm, a condition being inserted in the writing of

agreement, that unless he shall receive satisfaction for the farm, it shall be lawful for him to enter upon and hold the land which he let. If he to whom the land shall have been let, shall not make satisfaction for the farm, and he who let it shall not have the power to enter upon the land according to the tenor of his writing, because of the strength of his adversary ; in this case the tenement should be recovered with costs by a Writ of convention.

Sometimes, when it is agreed between parties that one enfeoffs another with a certain tenement, and shall have to give him Seisin on a certain day, and afterwards shall have transferred that tenement to a third person by enfeoffment, as he cannot confirm that enfeoffment by a former contract not carried into effect, he who has received the injury cannot in this case proceed by Writ of convention, except only in this, that he satisfies him for his costs in money. And thus in this case the action shall proceed for the tenement by Writ of convention, and in case of money or damages, or the tenement.

And because contracts of agreement are infinite, it would be difficult to make mention of each specially, but judgment shall be had according to the nature of each agreement by the affirmation of one party and the denial of the other, or an Inquisition shall be entered into upon the fact of the transaction, or recourse shall be had to a cognizance of the writings produced in judgment, and it shall be adjudicated according to that Cognizance. Or if the writings are denied then proceedings shall be had to inquire into the framing of the writings by the witnesses named in the writings, if such be, together with a jury, but if no witnesses be named, or if they be dead, then it shall be determined solely by jury.

Of the fourth Article, to wit, of personal transgressions, concerning which it is provided that all transgressions of which the damages do not exceed forty shillings, shall be tried before the Sheriff in the County Court, without writ, by Bail and Pledges. But Transgressions which exceed the sum of forty shillings shall be tried before the Justice of Wales in this manner :

That before the Justice hears him, he shall swear the Plaintiff that his action exceeds the sum of forty shillings, and having done this, and surety for proceeding being given, the Justice shall order the Sheriff or the Bailiff of the place to cause by writ, him of whom complaint is made to come before him, and the complaint of the prosecutor being heard, the accused shall answer. And as in an action of Transgression, the accused can hardly escape unless he defends himself by a jury, the Justice shall by consent of parties inquire into the truth of the matter by a good jury, and if the accused be found guilty, he shall punish him by Prison, or by Redemption, or by Mercy, and by damages rendered for the injury according to the quality and amount of the offence ; so that such punishment be to others an example and be a terror to offenders. And inasmuch as mention has been made of consent of parties, it may so happen that the accused may refuse the Inquisition by Jury ; in that case if the Prosecutor offer to prove by

jury the Transgression done to him, and the accused shall refuse a jury, he shall be taken as convicted and shall be punished as if convicted by a jury.

And because Women have not hitherto been dowered in Wales, the King grants that they be dowered. And be it known that the dower of a Woman is double. One is the assignment of the third part of the land possessed by her husband in his life, respecting which there shall be a Writ of proportional dower, elsewhere mentioned along with the other Writs of Wales."

The process of such Writ is this :

"First of all surety for prosecuting being found, let the Deforciant be Summoned that he attend on a certain day, on which if he come not, let him be again Summoned that he come on another day, on which day if he come not, let her dowery be adjudged to the Woman, to wit, the third part &c. together with costs &c. But if the Defendan come, let him be admitted to an answer without a view of the land, and the petition of the woman being framed, let the holder of the land be told to answer if he know any reason why she should not have her dowery ; and if he knows no reason let the woman recover as above.

But if by chance he should object that she ought not to have her dower because she never was joined in lawful matrimony to him whom she calls her husband, then it shall be ordered that the Bishop inquire into the truth, and inquisition being made, he shall certify the Justice of Wales, and according to the certificate of the Bishop, judgment shall be proceeded with in this form.

If the Bishop shall certify that she was not his lawful wife, she shall be precluded from her dowery. But if he certify that she was his lawful wife, the holder of the land shall be summoned to attend on a certain day to hear his judgment. At which day if he come not, let him be again summoned to come on another day, on which day, whether he come or not, if no essoin be alleged, the woman shall recover her dower with costs and the Defendant shall be at mercy, always saving the King's mercy for defaulters.

But if he object that she ought not to receive her dower, because her husband did not on the day of marriage, or ever afterwards, hold in fee the tenement, of which she claims her dower, so that he could endow her with it, the fact is to be tried solely by jury, and proceedings had according to the verdict of the jury.

If it be objected that she ought not to receive her dower because her husband has committed felony, then if the felony be proved she shall not recover her dower.

In like manner, if it be objected to her that her husband lost the land of which she claims her dower, by judgment, as that to which he had no right, this being proved by the record of Justice, if it should be shown before whom that land was lost, either by jury, if in the County Court, or in a minor Court, she shall be precluded from recovering her dower.

Another Dower is when a son endows his wife by consent of his father, the form of the Writ will be found amongst the rest, the process of which is as follows.

Let the Deforciant be Summoned as in the other Writ of Dower, and let his contumacy be punished as in the other writ of Dower. But if he shall come on the appointed day, then the Woman's petition being made, let him answer, and if the Dower be produced, made in the aforesaid manner, and the consent of Dower, and it can be proved by the jury that the husband endowed her at the Church door with his father's tenement, and that his father personally, or by a special messenger sent for this purpose agreed to that dower, the woman shall recover her dower together with damages.

Be it known also that in both Writs the Defendant can call for a Warrant by the aid of the Court, and the proceedings shall be had by plea of Warrant as aforesaid.

But there is a difference in that case of Dower and in the above case by Precipe, where the manner of proceedings terminates by warrant, because where in that case the Plaintiff always recovers the thing claimed, and the Defendant, according to the value of the land in the Warrant; in case of Dower by the other mode the Defendant shall hold in peace, and the woman shall have of the land in the Warrant according to the value of the Dower claimed, whilst nevertheless, the Defendant shall have of her husband's land according to value if this can be done, otherwise not.

Of the manner of assigning Dower otherwise, nothing at present.

Because the custom is different in Wales to England respecting hereditary succession, inasmuch as the heirship is divisible among the male heirs, and has been divisible from time of which memory does not exist, the King will not that this custom be abrogated, but that patrimony, remain divisible amongs consimilar heirs according as customary, and that the partition of such patrimony be made as usual; with this exception, that Bastards shall not share in the patrimony, and also that they have no share either with the lawful heirs or without lawful heirs.

And if by chance any patrimony shall henceforth, for want of heirs male, descend to the lawful heirs female of the last ancestor seized of it, we will of our special grace that such legitimate women have their portions thence assigned to them in our Court, although this be contrary to the custom of Wales hitherto in use.

And because the Welsh have besought that we grant to them that in their immoveable possessions, such as lands and tenements, the truth be inquired into by good and lawful men of the Venue chosen by consent of the parties; and concerning moveables, as contracts, debts, securities, agreements, chattels, and all other similar moveables, that they may use the Welsh Law, which they have been accustomed to, which was such, that if any one complained of another concerning contracts or acts in a certain place, that the intention of the Plaintiff might be proved by those seeing and hearing it: When the Plaintiff shall by this kind of Witnesses, whose testimony cannot be disproved, have proved his intention, he shall recover the property claimed, and the adverse party shall be condemned. And in other things which cannot be proved by those seeing and hearing, the Defendant shall clear himself sometimes by more, sometimes by fewer, according to the quality and quantity of the property or act. And in theft, if the theft shall be found in his hand, he shall not be able to clear himself but shall be accounted convicted.

We for the common peace and quiet of our foresaid people of our Land of Wales do grant these premises. Nevertheless so that in theft, larcenies, burnings, murders, homicides, and open and notorious robberies, they shall have no place, nor shall they extend to such, in which we will that the Laws of England be used as is mentioned above.

And thus we for the rest, we command you that ye firmly observe the Premises in all things, nevertheless that as often soever, and whensoever and wheresoever it may please us, we may declare, interpret, add to, or diminish the foregoing Statutes at our free will, and as we shall see expedient for our safety and that of our foresaid Land.

In witness of which matter our seal is appended to these Presents. Given at Rhuddlan on Sunday in Mid-Lent, in the twelfth year of our Reign."

Such is the Statute of Rhuddlan by which Edward the First united Wales to England. But it must here be observed, that the term *Wales* is to be understood in a limited sense, as that portion of the country comprehended under this statute by no means extended over the whole of the territory now comprised within the limits of Wales, but only over such parts as had fallen into Edward's hands on the death of Llewelyn ap Gruffydd. Some other districts had already been in the possession of the English Kings, but by far the greatest portion of the country was in the hands of the Lords Marchers, who were much too powerful and too jealous for Edward to meddle with, and whose dominions were left under the mixed and anomalous species of jurisprudence already adverted to, consisting of Welsh and English Courts and usages.

In the Statute of Rhuddlan it will also be noticed that several portions of the Welsh Laws were retained and incorporated with the Anglo-Norman. Some of these were retained, probably from political motives, as adding to the power of the King: but perhaps others were found to possess a certain degree of excellence in themselves, and were on that account adopted.

But whatever advantages or disadvantages this Statute of Rhuddlan may have been productive of, one thing is clearly shown, both in the Statute itself, and in the preliminary inquiries; and that is, that the Welsh were at that time, and have been for some generations, engaged in revising and reforming their own Laws; and it is distinctly

proved that they had amongst them the practice of trial by jury, not only during the reign of Llewelyn ap Gruffyth, the last Prince, but even during the reign of his Grandfather, Prince Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, as is clearly stated. Whether the practice of trial by jury amongst the Welsh was one of those spontaneous social movements, which took place about the eleventh century, or whether it was the development of some principle of the ancient British Law, must remain a subject of future investigation; but it is clear that it must have been a practice of voluntary adoption amongst the Welsh, as in the time of Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, no foreign power could have imposed a code of laws upon them, or in any way have dictated in matters of legislation.

There were several enactments relative to the Principality subsequent to the Statute of Rhuddlan, but none of material importance until the reign of Henry VIII, when Wales was divided into Counties or Shire-ground, and the English system of judicature more generally introduced, though there were still many things retained as peculiar to Wales.

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